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ABSTRACT

This booklet contains the statement of the United States Catholic Conference, "Putting Children and Families First: A Challenge for Our Church, Nation, and World," and provides a comprehensive resource for organizing church and community action to improve the conditions of children in the nation. A practical planning guide, support materials, clip art, bulletin quotes, and liturgical and preaching guides and models are included. Chapters on "Catholic School Resources" and "Religious Education Resources" (p.41-44) provide a specific link to education. Discussion questions and resource information complete the guide. (EH)

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A CATHOLIC CHILDREN AND FAMILIES first CAMPAIGN

Parish Resource Manual

United States Catholic Conference
Washington, D.C.

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A CATHOLIC CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FIRST CAMPAIGN

Parish Resource Manual

United States Catholic Conference
Washington, D.C.

A Catholic Campaign for Children and Families: A Resource Manual, which accompanies this statement, is a collaborative effort of a number of Conference offices and national Catholic organizations. It was coordinated by the Department of Social Development and World Peace as a part of its plans and priorities for 1992. The statement and resource manual are authorized for publication by the undersigned.

Monsignor Robert N. Lynch
General Secretary
NCCB/USCC

July 15, 1992

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NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
3211 4th Street N.E. Washington, DC 20017-1194 (202)541-3100 FAX (202)541-3166
UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

Dear Pastor:

Nothing unites our Church more than our commitment to children and families. They are our hope and our future. But many of our children and families are in deep trouble. Their lives, dignity, and futures are destroyed and diminished by false values, misguided policies, national neglect, and global indifference.

Last November, the Catholic bishops of the United States declared:

> Our nation is failing our children...We seek to call attention to this crisis and to fashion a response that builds on the *values* of our faith, the *experience* of our community and the *love and compassion* of our people.

Children and families are at the heart of parish life and parishes are at the heart of the Church's efforts to support children and families. We know that for most parishes, time and resources are already stretched very thin. That's why we prepared this manual to make it as easy as possible for you to participate in a Catholic Campaign for Children and Families. This manual offers a wide variety of resources for parishes seeking to strengthen their service, advocacy, and action for children and families. It includes:

- a copy of the bishops' statement *Putting Children and Families First*
- a general parish planning guide
- liturgical and homily helps
- specific suggestions for further integrating this priority into parish education, social ministry and family support efforts
- tools for education, inserts for parish bulletins, and prayers for families
- clip art and brief quotes for parish bulletins
- a wide array of written and audiovisual resources
- an order form for a special video, *I Am Only A Child*

These materials are parish friendly. They recognize the tremendous efforts already underway. They reflect the great diversity of parishes – in their size and structures, in their ethnic and racial make-up, in their challenges and opportunities.

You and your parishioners will know best how to use this resource. The Resource pages are perforated so you can copy and share the appropriate sections with those responsible for liturgy, preaching, formation, family life, and social ministry. They will find ideas and specific resources for further integrating this focus into the life of your parish, by building on current efforts without adding unrealistic responsibilities or demands. To purchase additional copies of the statement, call 1-800-235-8722.

This booklet offers ideas and tools, not burdens and mandates. It is not a comprehensive national program to be carried out by each parish. Rather, we rely on the demonstrated commitment and creativity of parishes across the country to act, adapt, and innovate, to continue to respond to and serve families and children.

The variety of resources offered here was the result of an unprecedented collaborative effort involving many national structures — social justice and pro-life, education and family life, human services and communications, Hispanic and African American, among others.

We hope this remarkable coalitional effort will contribute to a creative Catholic response to the growing neglect of children and families. In our recent statement, the bishops called for the Catholic community to "become a persistent, informed, and committed voice for children and families, urging all American institutions from neighborhood associations to the federal government to put our children and families first."

We hope your parish will join in this unprecedented Catholic Campaign for Children and Families. For further information or assistance, please call your local diocese or the United States Catholic Conference (202/541-3195).

Sincerely,

+James W Malone

The Most Rev. James W. Malone
Bishop of Youngstown
on behalf of the U.S. Catholic Bishops
and the contributors listed below
July 1992

Contributors

This manual was made possible through a unique collaborative effort involving many Catholic agencies and organizations. The following groups contributed to the content and/or provided financial support for this packet.

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> ***Susan Vogt***
> *Co-Director, Family Ministry Office*
> *Diocese of Covington, Ky.*

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[illegible] AND FAMILIES FIRST

A Challenge
for Our Church,
Nation, and World

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Putting Children and Families First: A Challenge for Our Church, Nation, and World was developed by three conference committees: Domestic Social Policy, International Policy, and Marriage and Family Life. After review and approval by all three committees, the statement was approved by the Administrative Board in September 1991 and by the Catholic bishops of the United States at their General Meeting in November 1991. *Putting Children and Families First: A Challenge for Our Church, Nation, and World* is authorized for publication as a statement of the United States Catholic Conference by the undersigned.

Monsignor Robert N. Lynch
General Secretary
NCCB/USCC

December 10, 1991

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I. Introduction: Children within a Family Perspective

Our nation is failing many of our children. Our world is a hostile and dangerous place for millions of children. As pastors in a community deeply committed to serving children and their families, and as teachers of a faith that celebrates the gift of children, we seek to call attention to this crisis and to fashion a response that builds on the values of our faith, the experience of our community, and the love and compassion of our people. We seek to shape a society – and a world – with a clear priority for families and children in need and to contribute to the development of policies that help families protect their children's lives and overcome the moral, social, and economic forces that threaten their future.

We focus on the situation of our children for several reasons:

- **Our children are a test of both our humanity and our faith**. As Pope John Paul II said in *Familiaris Consortio*, "In the Christian view, our treatment of children becomes a measure of our fidelity to the Lord himself."
- **Our children are hurting**, in the United States and around the world. They are among the most vulnerable members of the human family. The lives, dignity, rights, and hopes of literally millions of children are at risk.
- **Our children are our future** – they will be the leaders, the believers, the parents, the citizens of tomorrow. In responding to their needs today, we shape a better future for all.
- **Our children are our present.** Our children bring us special gifts, today, not just tomorrow. They are the sign of God's continual gift to the world. Thus, we need to respect them and place their rights as a priority in our society and our Church.
- **Parents need support and help** in meeting the challenges of raising children in the face of the cultural, economic, and moral pressures of our day.

No institution can substitute for the committed love, daily sacrifice, and hard work of parents in caring for their children. But every institution should support parents in their essential tasks. Our Church must be an ally and advocate for parents as they struggle to meet their children's needs at home and in an often hostile world where powerful economic and social forces can overwhelm the love and care of a family.

Our purpose is to share the facts of a society failing its children and a world neglecting children, and to explore the moral dimensions, human consequences, and religious meaning of these failures. We invite the Catholic community and the broader society to respond to this urgent moral challenge and to suggest some basic values and directions for our families, nation, and world in meeting it. We urge a reordering of priorities – personal, ecclesial, and societal – to focus more on the needs and potential of our children. This message is a call for conversion and action – a spiritual and social reawakening to the moral and human costs of neglecting our children and families.

In these reflections, we build on our past efforts especially our statements on family, human life, and social justice. We focus on children, not as unconnected individuals, but as members of families. Every family has a mission "to guard, reveal, and communicate love" and children are at the center of that mission. We address the needs of children from a family perspective.

Children are the poorest members of our society—one out of five children grows up poor in the richest nation on earth.

If society seeks to help children, it has to support families, since children's lives are nurtured or neglected, enhanced or diminished by the quality of family life.

II. The Realities

Childhood should be a happy, secure, and safe time of growth and development. For many children, it is. We are learning more and more about the remarkable human, moral, and spiritual development of young people. They are resilient, adaptive, and resourceful. But for far too many of our children all over the world, childhood is an often dangerous and overwhelming struggle.

A. Children in the United States

We ask you to consider these sad facts of our national life:

- Every year 1.6 million of our children are destroyed by legalized abortion even before they are born. They are denied their most basic right, the right to life itself.
- Children are the poorest members of our society – one out of five children grows up poor in the richest nation on earth. Among our youngest children, a fourth are poor. Children are nearly twice as likely to be poor as any other group. Among children, the younger you are, the more likely you are to be poor in America. And poverty means chil-

Jeffrey High/Image Productions

...[C]ommon stereotypes are often misleading.... Most poor children are white; most are from working families; and the child poverty rate in rural America is higher than for the nation as a whole.

dren miss the basics – the food, housing, and health care they need to grow and develop. They are deprived in a way that hurts and distorts their lives.

- Forty thousand children born each year in the U.S. do not live to see their first birthday. Sixty-seven newborn babies die each day in our land. Our infant mortality rate puts us last among twenty western nations.
- The United States has the highest divorce rate, the highest teenage pregnancy rate, the highest child poverty rate, and the highest abortion rate in the Western world.
- An estimated 5.5 million U.S. children under twelve are hungry; another 6 million are underfed.
- The rate of teenage suicide has tripled in thirty years.
- More than 2.5 million children suffer physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect in one year in the United States.
- More teenage boys die of gunshot wounds than from all natural causes combined.
- More than 25 percent of our teenagers drop out of school; SAT scores have declined 70 points since 1963.
- More than 8 million children are in families without health insurance.
- Mothers and children make up an increasing proportion of the homeless in our land.

Children need a secure and stable **family life.** However, families today are facing enormous pressures and significant change:

- Many parents, regardless of income, struggle to meet the emotional, spiritual, and physical needs of their children in the face of powerful moral, economic, and social pressures that make their task more difficult.
- Divorce has quadrupled in thirty years to touch almost half of all marriages. Half of all noncustodial parents do not see their children in the first year after divorce. Three-quarters of these parents have no contact with their children after ten years.
- Most families need two incomes to meet their economic needs. More than half of mothers with children under six are in the paid work force.
- Almost a fourth of our children are growing up in single-parent families, most of them headed by women who are more likely to live in poverty.
- More middle class families are experiencing greater difficulty affording a home, obtaining quality health care, and paying for their children's education, especially college.
- Families face diverse challenges in raising children: the reality of crime and violence, the allure of materialism and consumerism, continuing prejudice and intolerance, media that often belittle family values, and public policy and corporate practices that too often ignore the family responsibilities of parents.

These pressures are exacerbated by prejudice and discrimination. African American, Asian American, Hispanic, and Native American families have remarkable strengths often unappreciated by others. Against pervasive discrimination, the family in these communities has been both a refuge and a launching pad; however, minority children still face very significant obstacles. Forty-three percent of African American children grow up in poverty. A majority of these children are in single-parent families. The poverty rate for Hispanic children (32 percent) is growing more rapidly than for any other group. In addition, discrimination against women means that they still earn significantly less than men; this often has devastating consequences for children in families headed by women.

However, common stereotypes are often misleading. Only one out of ten poor children is a black child living in a female-headed family on welfare in a central city. Most poor children are white; most are from working families; and the child poverty rate in rural America is higher than for the nation as a whole.

Changes in economic life, personal values, and American culture have combined to leave children vulnerable. Joblessness and declines in real wages have squeezed many families. Antifamily welfare, tax, health, and workplace policies have undermined children's lives. The national failure to invest adequately in programs that clearly work (e.g., Head Start, WIC, Child Health Services) has left many families without the help they need. Broader cultural and social forces, including the media, have also undermined family values and the importance of children. We are faced with a pattern of national neglect that seriously shortchanges our children. We have neither a comprehensive family policy nor a consistent concern for children. And the youngest members of our society are paying a huge price for our neglect.

> ***The tragic fate of too many children is not simply an economic or social problem, but a sign of moral failure and a religious test.***

B. Children in the World

Across the globe – and especially in the poorest countries – the picture is even more stark and discouraging:

- Millions of children are dying – from starvation, disease, poverty, and military conflict. According to UNICEF, forty thousand children die *every day* from malnutrition and related diseases.

- Wars have killed nearly 2 million children in the last fifteen years; more than twice that number have been physically disabled; and it is not possible to even estimate the number who have been traumatized as a result of these conflicts.

- Seven million children are growing up in refugee camps because of war and natural disasters; a slightly larger number have been uprooted from their homes in their own countries. More than five thousand refugee children without parents have been resettled over the last decade by our Church here in the U.S.; while, unfortunately, other undocumented children without their parents who have entered the U.S. are held in detention under terrible conditions.

- Approximately 80 million children work in often monotonous, repetitive, and dangerous jobs; in some countries these exploited children earn wages of five to seven cents an hour.

- Fifteen percent of the world's 2 billion children under fifteen years of age live under what UNICEF terms "especially difficult circumstances." Millions, for example, live in the streets of the exploding Third World cities, resorting to theft, drug trafficking, prostitution, and other desperate measures to survive.

- Children's futures are undermined by war, injustice, and denial of human rights around the world. For example, children pay the highest price for apartheid in South Africa, violence in Central America, repression in China, and war in the Persian Gulf and Croatia.

- Sickness ravages poor families. Diseases long banished or generally unknown in the industrialized world – measles, malaria, sleeping sickness – kill hundreds of thousands annually. And now we see the worldwide consequences of AIDS, which will produce an estimated 10 million orphans in this decade in Africa alone.

As in our own nation, poverty around the world falls most heavily and directly on women and children. They are the most likely to suffer from the chronic hunger which results from poverty and powerlessness. Their future is mortgaged to flawed "development" which increases a nation's gross national product, but worsens its distribution, helping the rich at the expense of the poor. It is women and children who suffer most when the elites of poor nations invest abroad rather than at home, and when foreign aid from more affluent nations is reduced. And they are the first victims of the cuts in social services made by developing countries to "adjust" their economies in order to pay their burdensome debts. As we pointed out in our statement on the external debt, children are literally dying of the consequences of that debt.

The sheer magnitude of these national and international statistics can obscure and overwhelm the human dimensions of this crisis. Imagine the loss and despair of a parent watching a child die of hunger. Consider the pain of a parent who cannot provide a home for a child. These realities are not abstract issues, but human tragedies and moral challenges. We believe that behind each of these numbers is a sister or brother, a child of God. The tragic fate of too many children is not simply an economic or social problem, but a sign of moral failure and a religious test.

III. The Moral and Religious Dimension

In the Catholic community, we draw on three basic resources to shape our response to this moral challenge: the Scriptures, Catholic teaching, and our experience in serving children and their families.

A.The Lessons of Scripture

In the Bible, children are both a blessing from God and a test of the community's values. The ancient Hebrews believed children were a sign of God's favor (Gn 15:1-6). Our fathers and mothers in faith prayed for children, and God answered their pleas (Gn 15:1-6; 1 Sm 1:9-21). But the Scriptures also record terrible sins against the young. Children were the victims of abuse (Ps 10:18; 94.6; Jb 22:9). Orphans were especially vulnerable and became objects of God's special care. God and his Covenant upheld the rights of abandoned children (Ps 68:5; Jer 49:11), provided for their support (Dt 24:19-22), and demanded their protection (Ex 22:22-24).

Holiness and justice are to be found in those who are ready to give wholehearted, generous support to the vulnerable children: "To the fatherless be as a father, and help their mother as a husband would..." (Sir 4:10). "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God... is this," the letter of James declares, "to care for orphans and widows in their affliction..." (Jas 1:27).

Under the covenant, care of orphans and widows, like that of aliens and the poor, was the responsibility of both families and the whole society. The prophets inveighed against the people for their failure to do justice "by advancing the claim of the fatherless" (Jer 5:28) and by exploiting widows and orphans (Ez 22:7). Indeed, God's continued presence among the people depended on doing justice to the oppressed:

> Only if you thoroughly reform your ways and your deeds; if each of you deals justly with his neighbor, if you no longer oppress the resident alien, the orphan, and the widow; ...will I remain with you in this place, in the land which I gave your fathers long ago and forever (Jer 7:4-7).

In the New Testament we read how Jesus came into the world as a vulnerable and homeless child. We also hear of God's love for us and the frequent reference to children in the parables. For example, in explaining the goodness of God, Jesus says, "Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread, or a snake when he asks for a fish? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him" (Mt 7:7-11).

Jesus welcomed and blessed children (Mt 19:12-15) and called his disciples to act as children in receiving the word of God. Jesus tells his disciples: "Whoever receives one child...in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me" (Mk 9:36-37). This parallels the story of the last judgment, where we learn that in serving "the least among us," we serve the Lord; this parable insists that our judgment depends on our response to the hungry, the thirsty, the naked (Mt 25). In our day the "orphans and widows" are poor children and single parents; the "least of these" are hungry and homeless children; unwanted, unborn children; crack babies; and children with AIDS.

No institution is more deeply involved in serving the needs of children than our community of faith. We bring not only deep conviction, but also vast experience to the challenge of meeting the needs of children.

The Scriptures call on believers to stand up for the poor and vulnerable. "Speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of the destitute, open your mouth, decree what is just, defend the needy and the poor" (Prv 31:8-9). And, the early Church was called in the first letter of John to put love of God into action, "...[W]e should love one another.... If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him? Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth." (1 Jn 3:11-17).

B.The Teaching of the Church

1. Traditional Social Teaching

The biblical call to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves and to make Christian love real and active has taken explicit shape over the last century in the traditional social teaching of our Church. This tradition and its key principles shape and guide our response to the moral challenge of our children. These principles include the life and dignity of the human person, human rights and responsibilities, the call to family and community, the dignity of work, the option for the poor and vulnerable, and the principle of solidarity. These principles take on increasing urgency and relevance as they are so clearly violated in the lives of so many children. Applying Catholic social teaching today requires a priority focus on children.

2. Teaching on Family

We also share a more specific ecclesial heritage of teaching on children and families. Through children, God shares with women and men a special participation in creation.[1] If we are to protect and nurture this gift of children, we must have strong families.[2]

The physical, psychological, moral, and spiritual health of children is intimately linked to the health of families. In Christian terms, the family is sacred and holy, a "community of life and love," which prepares, nourishes, and sustains the youngest members of the Church in their task of building up the kingdom of God.[3] In social terms, families are the "first and vital cell of society," the building block of community.[4]

Our family perspective demands that the rights of children are directly linked to the rights and responsibilities of families. These rights were outlined in the Holy See's *Charter of Family Rights.* They include the right to found a family, to a stable marriage, to bear and educate children in one's faith, to social and economic security, to decent housing, to protect children from harm, and to immigrate.[5]

These rights are linked to the responsibilities of families, including four fundamental tasks:

- *Families form children in a loving community.* Each member of the family shares in the responsibility to build this unique community of love. Children contribute to this community through their gift of love, respect, and obedience toward their parents. Parents, in turn, nurture their children in self-giving love, mutual respect, and discipline. In these ways, families challenge the exaggerated individualism and selfishness that so distort our society.
- *Families serve the life and dignity of children.* Men and women joined in marriage share in God's love and power as Creator by their free and responsible cooperation in transmitting the gift of human life through the moral exercise of the gift of human sexuality. This participation in God's creative activity involves both bringing children into the world and taking part in their upbringing and education. Parents are the first and most important educators of their children. Responsible parenthood is a cornerstone of the Church's teaching on family and a healthy society.
- *Families bring children to participate in the development of society.* Parents help children grow in moral and spiritual maturity and also help to build a caring and just society. Through families, children should come to identify with the most needy in the community, especially poor and suffering children, and should develop a life-long commitment to respond through service of the poor and disadvantaged and through action for justice and peace in their own communities and the world.
- *Families enable children to share in the life and mission of the Church.* In the family, parents communicate the Gospel to their children, and children as well as parents learn to live it in their daily lives. Parents have a responsibility, through word and example, to help make prayer and the sacraments an integral part of their children's lives. The Gospel of Jesus and the life of faith are enormous gifts to our children, offering meaning, direction, and discipline in a world that often lacks them. Parents instill in their children a commitment to loving service of others, helping them to discover in every person the image of God.

As believers and citizens, we need—each of us—to use our values, voices, and votes to hold our public officials accountable and to shape a society that puts our children first.

These tasks of families are shared with others, especially extended families, parishes, and other networks of family support. An African proverb suggests "It takes a whole village to raise a child." In our society it takes grandparents and godparents, friends and relatives, teachers and pastors, and many others. We recognize and support the diverse sources of strength and help for families.

3. Society: Protector and Promoter of Children and Families

Social institutions increasingly share many of the family's responsibilities toward children, but they can never take the place of families. Rather, social institutions—government at all levels, employers, religious institutions, schools, media, community organizations—should enter into creative partnerships with families so that families can fulfill their responsibilities toward children. As we said in *Economic Justice for All,* "Economic and social policies as well as the organization of work should be continually evaluated in light of their impact on the strength and stability of family life."

These themes are reinforced by the message of Pope John Paul II's encyclical, *Centesimus Annus,* which emphasizes the continuing value of Catholic social teaching. The pope calls the family "the sanctuary of life" and says:

> In order to overcome today's widespread individualistic mentality, what is required is *a concrete commitment to solidarity and charity,* beginning in the family.... It is urgent therefore to promote not only family policies, but also those social policies which have the family as their principal object, policies which assist the family by providing adequate resources and efficient means of support, both for bringing up children and for looking after the elderly... (49).

The Holy Father also insists that the strengths and efficiency of a market economy like our own need to be harmonized with the needs and rights of families, especially the poor and workers, and he warns against overly bureaucratic responses to family needs.

Jim Whitmer

As family members and citizens we must measure our choices as individuals, as a nation, and as a global community for their impact on children and families.

C. The Experience of the Catholic Community

For decades, even centuries, the Catholic community has been deeply involved in meeting the human, pastoral, and educational needs of children and their families. In 1727 the Ursuline Sisters founded the first Catholic home for abandoned children in New Orleans. Presently, millions of families are served by Catholic Charities, which offers help in meeting basic needs, providing foster care and adoption, family counseling and alternatives to abortion. Hungry and homeless children are assisted in our shelters, by our soup kitchens and our parish-based food pantries. Our elementary and secondary schools offer educational opportunies to millions of children. Through parish religious education and adult education programs, we provide ongoing programs of marriage preparation and enrichment, natural family planning, family ministry, youth ministry, and parenting skills.

Our national and state conferences of Catholic bishops, Catholic Charities, arch/diocesan ministerial offices, and other organizations are deeply involved in advocacy for children and families. We also provide ongoing programs of family ministry and marriage preparation and enrichment. The Campaign for Human Development helps to empower families in their search for justice. Around the world, missionaries, Catholic Relief Services, Holy Childhood Association, and our immigration and refugee programs offer hope and help to desperate children and families.

Because of our long and continued involvement with children and families, the concerns on which we now focus are neither new or abstract, but rather evidence of real, continuing, and perhaps worsening conditions for children. We bring not only our values to this concern, but also broad experience and expertise in caring for children and their families. No institution is more deeply involved in serving the needs of children than our community of faith. We bring not only deep conviction, but also vast experience to the challenge of meeting the needs of children.

IV. The Moral Challenge

Believers, as heirs of this religious tradition, cannot confront the tragic situation of so many children and turn away. As family members and citizens we must measure our choices as individuals, as a nation, and as a global community for their impact on children and families.

Within our *families,* we need to teach – by word and example, by our priorities and our lives – the values that help our children grow to be responsible, faithful, caring, and disciplined. Our love, our values, and our faith are passed on not only by what we say, but also by howwe live. Parents, especially, show love for their children by providing for their emotional and spiritual needs, as well as their material needs. This occurs, for example, when parents spend time with their children, when they discipline and guide them, when they show affection, and when they teach their children to pray and grow in faith.

In our *churches* we need to help families in their essential roles, offering both support and challenge. This requires liturgy and pastoral care responsive to children and families, first-rate religious education, schools, and other vital ministries. We can prepare people for marriage and help families learn the skills of parenting. We need to lift up the vocation of marriage and family life and offer to people the resources of our spiritual and sacramental heritage in effective and creative ways: through education, family life movements, family retreats, outreach to families in distress, support groups, youth programs, counseling, and the timeless spiritual resources of prayer, liturgy, and meditation.

As a *nation,* we need to make children and families our first priority; to invest in their future; to combat the forces – cultural, economic, and moral – which hurt children and destroy families; to manage our economy, shape our government, and direct our institutions to support and not undermine our families. In our society, we need to resist the trends toward excessive individualism, materialism, and the quest for personal pleasure above all else. Real happiness and satisfaction come from who we are and how we care for one another rather than from what we have. Our news and entertainment media, despite some laudable efforts, too often attack family values, undermine moral principles, and expose children to violence and to sexual themes on a daily basis. Fundamental values of integrity, compassion, respect for others, and honesty must be encouraged and reinforced by the culture at large.

In an *interdependent world*, we need to see clearly how children pay the price for global poverty and indifference, for official corruption, for far too much debt and not enough development, for a global economy dominated by the industrial countries which further impoverishes the poor. We need to understand and act on the links between the children we see dying on the nightly news and the economic and political structures that bring poverty and hunger to millions.

As believers and citizens, we need – each of us – to use our values, voices, and votes to hold our public officials accountable and to shape a society that puts our children first.

V. Criteria for National Policy

The most important work to help our children is done quietly – in our homes and neighborhoods, our parishes and community organizations. No government can love a child and no policy can substitute for a family's care, but clearly families can be helped or hurt in their irreplaceable roles. Government can either support or undermine families as they cope with the moral, social, and economic stresses of caring for children.

There has been an unfortunate, unnecessary, and unreal polarization in discussions of the best way to help families. Some emphasize the primary role of moral values and personal responsibility, the sacrifices to be made and the personal behaviors to be avoided, but they often ignore or de-emphasize the broader forces which hurt families, e.g., the impact of economics, discrimination, and antifamily policies. Others emphasize the social and economic forces that undermine families and the responsibility of government to meet human needs, but they often neglect the importance of basic values and personal responsibility.

> ***...[A] terrible sign of national failure is the implicit suggestion to many women—especially poor women—that they must choose between life for their unborn child and a decent future for themselves and for their families.***

The undeniable fact is that our children's future is shaped both by the values of their parents and the policies of our nation. Families are undermined by parental irresponsibility *and* discrimination and poverty. Children's lives are enriched by their parents' sacrifices *and* by economic policies that help mothers and fathers meet the demands of parenthood. It is time to move beyond rigid ideologies and political posturing to focus on the real needs of families. We believe parental responsibility *and* broader social responsibility, changed behavior *and* changed policies are complementary requirements to help families.

Our nation must move beyond partisan and ideological rhetoric to help shape a new consensus that supports families in their essential roles and insists that public policy support families, especially poor and vulnerable children. We will continue to advocate policies, programs, and priorities which meet these basic criteria:

1. *Put children and families first.* Analyze every policy and program – diocesan, parish, domestic, and international – for its impact on children and families; look at every proposal from a family perspective. Poor and vulnerable children have first claim on our common efforts.

2. *Help; don't hurt.* Insist that economic, tax, education, welfare, immigration and refugee, and human service policies support families rather than undermine families; that programs encourage self-help rather than promote dependency.

3. *Those with the greatest need require the greatest response.* This is the "option for the poor" in action. While every family needs support, poor families and families facing discrimination carry the greatest burdens and require the most help. With limited resources, we need to focus assistance on those with the greatest needs.

4. *Empower families. Help families meet their responsibilities to their children.* Families need to be empowered to make the choices that meet their diverse needs – in education, child care, health, work, and other areas. Tax, workplace, divorce, and welfare policies must help families stay together and care for their children.

5. *Fight economic and social forces which threaten children and family life.* Poverty; joblessness; lack of access to affordable health care, child care, and decent housing; and discrimination are among the greatest threats to families and children. Efforts to overcome poverty, provide decent jobs, and promote equal opportunity are pro-family priorities.

6. *Build on the strengths of families; reward responsibility and sacrifice for children.* Policy must recognize the resiliency and capacity for self-help of families and reward members of families who avoid destructive behavior.

7. ***Recognize that foreign policy is increasingly children's policy.*** Global poverty, armed conflict, and systematic injustice threaten the lives of millions of children and their families. Children will pay a terrible price for indifference toward international, economic policy and neglect of human rights.

These criteria have led our conference to support a wide variety of pro-family initiatives at both the national and international level:

- family and medical leave,
- pro-life legislation and alternatives to abortion,
- broad-based child care which allows for religious and cultural values,
- an increase in the minimum wage and Earned Income Tax Credit,
- pro-family welfare reform,
- proposals for choice in education,
- civil rights laws,
- laws prohibiting housing discrimination against families with children,
- family-based immigration,
- asylum and refugee policy,
- new federal budget priorities,
- increased access to health care and decent housing,
- support for substance abuse programs,
- broader proposals for economic justice and family support, and
- reform of U.S. foreign assistance programs.

VI. Directions for National Policy

In fashioning national policy, our society must recognize a serious problem both in our national and personal priorities. Our society neglects the needs of poor children. When our nation makes a commitment, it can make a difference. Decades ago poverty haunted large numbers of our elderly citizens. As a society we decided this was intolerable and put in place Social Security, Medicare, and other measures to protect the dignity of the elderly – with an impressive drop in poverty among their population. Now, our children are more likely to be poor, but our government spends less on children's needs. Cuts in federal expenditures have come disproportionately in programs serving children. Children don't vote; they don't contribute to political campaigns, and therefore, they are more likely to be ignored by governments and policy makers. Money alone will not solve the problems of poor families, but there is no substitute for wise and thoughtful investment in meeting the needs of America's children. We need to invest now, because the children are suffering now; and if we do not invest now, we will all suffer later.

> ***Growing violent abuse and neglect of infants and children have led to families where children are not only rejected but also endangered and to the phenomenon of the "no parent" family.***

At the same time, national policy should reinforce basic moral values while recognizing the diversity of America's families. The problems of American families stem from the misplaced priorities of our federal government, of some parents, and of society at large. Studies indicate that parents spend 40 percent less time with their children today than they did just twenty years ago. The absence of many fathers is a particularly serious problem – not only economically but socially as well. Public policy ought to reward parents who take their responsibilities seriously and encourage more responsible behavior in those who do not. The policies of our nation should neither exaggerate nor ignore the changes in family life. They must recognize both the diversity of families and the fact that, in general, stable, loving two-parent families offer the best chance for children.

Traditional moral values are not relics of a bygone age. Rather, they are the best guides to a productive future for our children and health for our society. A case in point is the often confused discussion of the best way to confront the AIDS crisis and its growing impact on young people. We continue to insist that our response should combine both compassion for those who live with AIDS and responsibility in avoiding behaviors which put people at risk. Instead of promoting the illusion of *safe sex*, we need to warn our children and society of the dangers of sexual promiscuity and drug abuse. Our moral convictions about expressing human sexuality within marriage now represent not only appropriate moral guidance, but also wise health counsel. Responsibility, unselfishness, concern for others, fidelity in marriage, and commitment to children are the building blocks of a creative and satisfying life and a just and decent society. They ought to be recognized in our public policies, encouraged in our media, and supported by our community institutions. In our society, we need to develop incentives and rewards for policies and behaviors that serve the needs of children and disincentives for those actions and policies which threaten or hurt children.

There is growing consensus in this area. A series of studies, reports, and a bipartisan commission have documented the needs of children and the failures of our society to meet those needs. And increasingly, experts and organizations including marriage and family counselors have shown signs of rethinking the positive values of stable marriage, the human costs of easy divorce laws, the social costs of excessive individualism, and the consequences of economic pressures on families.

We welcome and support renewed efforts of the helping professions to promote the reconciliation of spouse as a viable alternative to divorce. We acknowledge the significant changes in family life; we affirm the major contributions of women in the work force; and we support and applaud the often heroic efforts of single-parent families. We also emphasize the value of parents staying together and sacrificing to raise children. Children generally do best when they have the love and support – personal and material – of both their parents.

Many single-parent families overcome huge economic and social obstacles, but others are overwhelmed by these forces. Government efforts need to help families stay together and overcome the many pressures that pull families apart. We owe special help to those parents – mothers or fathers – who face family life alone, knowing how discrimination and other forces make a difficult job even tougher. This is especially true when single parenthood is combined with poverty, as it often is.

A. Protecting the Lives of Children

1. Unborn Children

From conception, unborn children are most at risk from this nation's antilife policy of abortion on demand. The ultimate example of powerlessness is to be destroyed before birth. And a terrible sign of national failure is the implicit suggestion to many women – especially poor women – that they must choose between life for their unborn child and a decent future for themselves and for their families. We need to shape a society where economic and social forces do not leave women facing fundamental questions of life and death alone and isolated without the support of a caring community. We reiterate our strong opposition to abortion and government funding for abortion. We will continue through education to expose the realities of abortion, to promote life-giving alternatives to abortion, and to provide the loving choice of adoption and caring support for pregnant women and mothers and children, especially the poor.

Unborn children are also at risk from AIDS and substance abuse, both of which call for expanded national efforts at education and prevention, the provision of prenatal and other health care, and treatment and rehabilitation of abusers of alcohol and other drugs.

2. Abuse and Neglect

Children are hurt and killed by violence within families. Families are destroyed by verbal, physical, and sexual abuse. These brutal and tragic realities threaten the lives and welfare of millions of children and women. They require education, treatment, and prevention. The family must be a place of safety, not of danger. And society must act to protect children and women from family violence and sexual abuse. Physical and sexual abuse of children constitutes a terrible betrayal of trust, a threat to their emotional and physical health, and a challenge for every institution that serves children. Child pornography represents a particularly terrible threat to children. They serve as subjects in the production of pornography and sex objects for those who make use of pornographic materials. This illegal and immoral use of children for sexual purposes and profit must be confronted and stopped. Pornography demeans women, degrades our society, and destroys the love at the center of human sexuality. We need effective, constitutional remedies which protect children, women, and all of society.

Growing violent abuse and neglect of infants and children have led to families where children are not only rejected but also endangered and to the phenomenon of the "no parent" family. These sad realities have created widespread strains on our child welfare system, including lack of adequate foster homes, inadequate support services, a shortage of trained personnel, inappropriate placements, and a serious absence of preventive services. System-wide reform is called for, including special attention to families where there is substance abuse and families in which children have serious emotional problems.

Parents should not have to worry about losing their jobs when they welcome a new child, nurse a sick spouse, or comfort a dying parent.

The primary goal of reform should be preserving families, wherever possible, through long-term, home-based services and programs designed to meet individual family needs before children's safety is jeopardized. We need far more coordination in the provision of family services, emphasizing prevention and replacing fragmented individual programs with concern for the whole family.

We also support policies which assist families who choose to adopt children or provide loving foster care for children at risk. Special efforts are needed to help minority and older children and children with disabilities find loving and supportive homes. Creative public policy and private action are needed to help every child find a home where his or her unique needs can be met.

B. Economic Help for Families

1. Poverty and Families

Poverty is not merely the lack of adequate financial resources. It often entails a more profound kind of deprivation; a denial of full participation in the economic, social, and political life of society; and an inability to influence decisions that affect one's life. It means being powerless in a way that assaults not only one's pocketbook but also one's fundamental human dignity.

Many children are poor because they were born to young parents who are unmarried and are not equipped to support them, but many others are poor because their parents are casualties of economic forces beyond their control: recession, industrial restructuring, erosion of real wages, unemployment, and discrimination in hiring and promotion. Staggering increases in the costs of essentials such as rent and medical care have meant that even full time work is no guarantee against poverty. Moreover, the holes in the safety net have gotten larger, making it much harder for families to recover from a layoff or extensive medical bills.

2. Decent Jobs at Decent Wages

Despite the long uninterrupted period of economic expansion in the 1980s, child poverty increased significantly in this nation. Clearly, economic growth alone is not sufficient to solve the problem, and the recent recession has already cost 2 million Americans their jobs. As we wrote in our 1986 pastoral letter on the U.S. economy, targeted economic policies are necessary to create sufficient jobs at adequate wages to support families in dignity. Decent jobs at decent wages – what used to be called a "family wage" – are the most important economic assets for families. Periodic increases in the minimum wage to reflect inflation would be a useful step in this direction.

Too many of our young people come to adulthood without goals or the skills needed in the world of work. All too often some succumb to the allure of crime or to the despair of a life without direction or accomplishment. Greater public and private efforts are needed to introduce young people to the challenges and rewards of meaningful work. Communities, in partnership with the public sector, should offer the kinds of training, apprenticeships, and service opportunities that will prepare young people to use their talents and energy in positive ways. National policies should ensure that all those who can work in fact have the opportunity to contribute to the common good by their labor.

3. Changing Tax Policy to Help Families

The 1986 tax reform law and later expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit have lightened some of the federal tax burden of poverty-level families with children, but the tax code needs further reform to bring fairness to the treatment of families, especially to those raising children on modest incomes. The current tax code fails to reflect the real costs of raising children and offers inadequate help to families with children.

We welcome proposals to reform the tax code to help families cope with the high cost of raising children. These proposals, which have drawn bipartisan support, would allow middle income families with children to keep more of what they earn and would help lift low income families out of poverty. Such proposals deserve serious consideration and general support in light of the current bias against children in our tax laws, especially those in low and moderate income families. As one commentator pointed out recently, taxpayers in America today can receive a bigger tax break for breeding racehorses than for raising children. We continue to support an expanded earned income tax credit to assist poor, working families. This pro-work, pro-family provision needs to be enhanced and supported as an important contribution to tax fairness.

4. Help for Poor Children

Children's lives are diminished every day in this nation because of the low level of welfare benefits. Misleading stereotypes of welfare families and misguided budget priorities are largely responsible for the failure of both federal and state governments to protect children from hunger, homelessness, and deprivation. We reiterate our call for a minimum national welfare benefit that will permit children and their parents to live in dignity. A decent society will not balance its budget on the backs of poor children. Sadly, the fiscal difficulties in many of our states has meant disproportionate cuts and unfair burdens for poor families.

Some aspects of welfare are antifamily. For example, in many states, unemployed fathers must leave the home so that the children can get welfare assistance beyond an initial six month period. We have frequently called for true welfare reform that would be both pro-family and pro-child. No family should have to separate as a condition of receiving assistance.

At a time when most mothers of young children are employed at least part time, our society sometimes loses sight of the value of parental care of young children. As preschoolers in day care becomes the norm, we fear the work of mothers in the home is becoming devalued, since it does not offer the economic rewards or recognition of other work.

Our conference strongly supports effective voluntary programs to equip parents with education and job skills. We oppose compulsory and poorly designed efforts to require them to hand over to others the daily care of their preschool children. The fact that children are poor and in need of government aid does not take away their basic human right to be cared for by their parents if that is their family's choice.

C. Helping Families at Work

1. Family-Friendly Policies

Families need workplace policies that promote responsive child-care arrangements; flexible employment terms and conditions for parents; and family and medical leave for parents of newborns, sick children, and aging parents. Increasing corporate efforts in this area are a major sign of hope for employees who are also members of families. Public policy should ensure and promote these family-friendly workplace arrangements, adequate public funding of broad-based and inclusive child-care and other essential services needed by families, especially poor families. In our own structures and institutions, we need to move toward personnel policies that more fully reflect our commitment to family life.

For seven years our conference has called for a law to protect people who have to take time away from their jobs to handle serious family responsibilities. Parents should not have to worry about losing their jobs when they welcome a new child, nurse a sick spouse, or comfort a dying parent.

Passage of a family-leave bill would not only protect the jobs of parents whose employers might otherwise penalize them for taking time for family responsibilities, but it would also send a message that the nation sees children as a real priority for all of society.

2. Child Labor

Another aspect of children's vulnerability to economic exploitation is new signs of child labor abuse. This abuse accompanies changes in industrial and agricultural patterns, in increasing pools of immigrants, in the dramatic increase in families living below the poverty line, and in the disregard for this nation's long established laws designed to protect children. Improved child labor law enforcement must be combined with adequate family economic support so that families do not depend on exploitation of children for economic survival.

D. Families and Discrimination

1. Race

Racial and ethnic discrimination hurts many families, limiting the income and future of African American, Asian American, Hispanic, and Native American families. Black children are twice as likely to be poor as white children. Minority children are also more likely to lack health care, to live in substandard housing, and to attend inadequate schools. Equal opportunity in education, affirmative action in employment, and nondiscrimination in housing are essential steps to ensure a productive and just future for children in minority families.

2. Gender

The lives of children are clearly bound with the lives and welfare of women in multiple ways. Discrimination against women continues to be a major contributor to children's poverty. Measures to combat economic discrimination against women – whether working in or outside the home – deserve strong support. Family decisions about parents' job choices should not be dictated by economic pressures which require both parents to work full time outside the home or should not be frustrated by discrimination which limits women's opportunity. Public policy and private action should encourage a range of possibilities, so that parents are able to work at home or are able to use job-sharing, flex time, and other means to better meet their obligations both as workers and as parents to their children.

Mothers who work outside the home to support their children often still struggle to balance work and family responsibilities and are confronted with continuing discrimination. As a group, women are still often relegated to jobs where low wages and few opportunities for advancement are common. Even in other occupations, some women experience continuing discrimination and sexual harassment, making it difficult to support their children with dignity. In *Economic Justice for All* we called for attention to proposals to correct the disparities in men's and women's wages, and we have supported legislation

Michael Hoyt/Catholic Standard

Families must be given genuine choice in education—selecting the public, parochial, or private school that best serves their family's needs.

to protect women from discrimination in hiring and promotions. A society that discriminates against women impoverishes its children.

E. Meeting Children's Basic Needs

Children need the love, acceptance, and support of a family that cares for them. But families need to be able to meet basic physical and social needs to help their children grow and develop.

1. Education

Adequate preschool, primary, and secondary education is essential to full development of our children. Nevertheless, several factors combine to produce increasing numbers of school dropouts, unskilled citizens, and functionally illiterate adults. Inadequate education is one of the surest predictors of poverty, contributing strongly to intergenerational cycles of poverty. Programs that work – Head Start for preschoolers, education for children with disabilities, and vocational training – must be made available to every child who needs them.

Society at large is increasingly recognizing the effectiveness of Catholic schools in meeting the educational needs of children, including poor and minority children. Families must be given genuine choice in education – selecting the public, parochial, or private school that best serves their family's needs. Parents have the primary right and responsibility for the education of children. For this reason, our nation needs education policies that respect parental choice such as vouchers and tax credits. We also need creative policies that will improve poor quality schools, increase parental and family involvement, and encourage teacher excellence in education. All schools need to support and affirm parents in their roles as the primary educators of their children – reinforcing basic values, discipline, honesty, character, citizenship, and concern for others.

2. Food and Hunger

The continuing reality of hungry children in our midst is a dismaying sign of failure. We see signs of this failure in our food pantries, soup kitchens, parishes, and schools. New investment and improvements are needed in basic nutritional programs, such as food stamps, to ensure that no child goes hungry in America. An urgent priority is the Women, Infant & Children (WIC) program, that still does not reach all expectant mothers, infants, and young children in need.

3. Health Care

The lack of basic health care – and factors tied directly to poverty – have been documented in the tragic reality that poor children are twice as likely as other children to have physical or mental disabilities or other chronic health conditions that impair daily activity. Our nation's continuing failure to guarantee access to quality health care for all people exacts its most painful toll in the preventable sickness, disability, and deaths of our infants and children. Beginning with our children and their mothers, we must extend access to quality health care to all our people. Quality and accessible prenatal care is essential for healthy children. There can be no excuse for the failure to ensure adequate health care and nutrition for pregnant women. Nothing would make a greater contribution to reducing infant mortality than progress in this area.

4. Housing

Many families cannot find or afford decent housing, or must spend so much of their income for shelter that they forego other necessities, such as food and medicine. National policy has neglected the housing needs of families – with serious consequences for children who are growing up in shelters or in overcrowded or substandard housing. We support housing policies which seek to preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing and help families pay for it. We urge national and local governments as well as community groups to work together in bringing about housing, planning, and zoning policies that reflect the needs for affordable housing for families. We also continue to call for efforts to eliminate housing discrimination, especially against families with children.

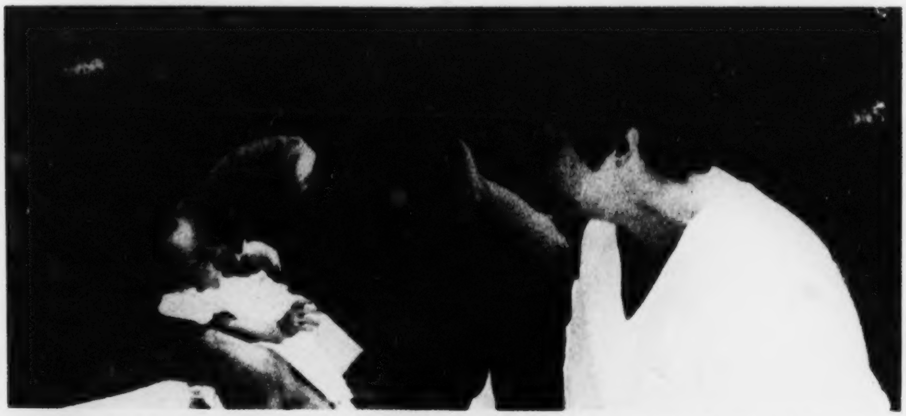
> ***Let us insist that by the year 2000 we will finally eliminate poverty among children in this affluent society, and we will have a world where children will no longer die of hunger.***

5. Families with Persons with Disabilities

Children with disabilities are fortunate indeed when they are born into or adopted by families that recognize that the spark of life is valuable, despite what impairments may accompany that gift. However, most disabled children are born into families who have no prior experience with such challenges.

Families with disabled children need and deserve extra support and encouragement from society, their communities, and the Church. Government at all levels must do more to ensure that children receive the medical, educational, rehabilitation, and social services they need to grow up to realize their full human potential. For example, the conference has pressed for several years for reform of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program to make benefits available to the many disabled children whose requests for assistance had been denied. Recent court decisions and legislative action setting more reasonable criteria and requiring outreach should be implemented as soon as possible.

Parents with disabilities are sometimes prevented from providing adequately for their children. Job discrimination, physical barriers in public transportation



CNS/Jan Phillips

The facts are that family structure remains an important predictor of economic standing in society, and two-parent families generally are the most effective units for raising children.

and work sites, and lack of rehabilitative services all contribute to the isolation and segregation of disabled parents and their children. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 has been called the most significant civil rights legislation since 1964. For the first time it was required that employment, transportation, public accommodations, and telecommunications be made fully accessible to disabled persons. All Americans need to work together to see the new law fully and properly implemented to benefit children and adults with disabling conditions.

F. Divorce and Child Support

It is also time for society to reconsider the consequences of permissive divorce, particularly in the case of couples with children. All of us have a stake in strong, stable families; yet, as a society, we do too little to help couples stay together and work things out during the inevitable times of stress and conflict. While many single parents struggle heroically to provide the love and care that normally require two parents, who can doubt that growing up in a secure environment with both parents generally gives children a head start?

In the United States today, one million children see their parents divorce each year. Another million children are born annually to single parents. Social and economic realities now confirm values which the churches have long taught – that the economic, emotional, and spiritual well-being of children is significantly diminished by divorce and out-of-wedlock birth, and that the negative consequences for children's futures, the lives of women, and for society at large are numerous and pervasive.

The facts are that family structure remains an important predicator of economic standing in society, and two-parent families generally are the most effective units for raising children. Public policy must be designed to help families stay together, to enhance their capacity for childrearing and for passing on moral and social values to their children, and to reinforce parental responsibilities.

As a Church, we need to reinvigorate our pastoral ministry to families, being a companion to parents whose marriages are strained, offering hope and practical assistance to them in times of trouble, and helping them strengthen their marriage for their children, of course, but also for themselves.

While keeping families together is our goal, we recognize the widespread tragedy of divorce and the realities of violence and destructive behavior within some families. We are not advocating that people remain in relationships which seriously endanger or harm members of a family. We do advocate that laws recognize the frequently devastating consequences of divorce on children.

In the area of divorce law, society should

(1) embrace a "children first" principle that focuses on adequate property and income to meet the needs of the children and their custodial parent before resolving disposition of marital and individual property;

(2) take into account the impact of motherhood on a woman's earning capacity as well as the per capita expenses of the household with women and children; and

(3) introduce "braking" mechanisms that encourage, for example, resolution of matters involving a child's future before settling questions of property and maintenance.

Our nation also needs tough new rules for establishing and collecting child support from absent parents and for closing the gap between what can reasonably be collected and the actual costs of raising children. Effective means must be found to ensure that absent parents provide for their children's needs.

Among the possibilities that should be considered are

(1) establishment of minimum child-support awards based on the number of children and the absent parent's income;

(2) automatic wage withholding, not only on new cases as required by law, but on existing child-support orders;

(3) possible registration of social security numbers of both parents on birth certificates; and

(4) more vigorous efforts by state agencies to establish paternity of children born out-of-wedlock. Perhaps most important, states must invest more resources to locate and collect support from runaway parents who frequently move across state lines to escape their responsibilities.

While much is appropriately said about how the lives of women and children are bound so closely together, we wish to say a specific word about the importance of fathers. A crucial measure of a man is the manner in which he cares for his family—whether children see his love, respect, and care for their mother; and whether he is involved in their daily care, emotional support, spiritual growth, education, and development. For too many women, the care of children is a lonely commitment lacking the full and active participation of fathers. In these cases, children lose vital emotional support, and fathers miss one of the richest and most challenging human experiences. Parenting should be a partnership of love and mutual support—fully involving both mother and father.

Michael Hoyt/Catholic Standard

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G. Broader Cultural Forces

There are broader cultural and societal forces that contribute to the neglect of children. An ethic of excessive individualism, a culture of consumerism, and a preoccupation with material progress have contributed to a situation where sacrifice for others and concern for the common good are neglected virtues.

In our society children are too often considered a liability, rather than the sacred promise of the future. Sadly, some young couples are fearful or indifferent to the joys and responsibilities of bringing children into the world and could miss one of the most enriching and creative dimensions of human life. In many families—rich, poor, and in-between—children miss the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual support they desperately need to thrive.

A particularly influential force is the communications media. Too often this powerful cultural force seems less an ally and more an adversary in sharing basic values and helping shape healthy children. With notable exceptions, our children are often exposed to pervasive violence; casual sex; and racial, ethnic, and sexual stereotypes in music, film, and television. We hope media could increasingly reinforce basic values of honesty, compassion, respect for others, and fairness, rather than simply send messages that diminish and distort human life and love. Changed policies in our nation must be matched by changed values in our society at large.

VII. International Dimensions

Internationally, the needs are no less urgent and the problems are, if anything, more intractable. The cheap labor of children helps debt-ridden Third World countries pay their creditors. The intensification of local conflicts through the international arms trade and, until recently, the competing strategies of superpowers, displaces children and diverts public spending from meeting their basic needs. And adjustment programs conceived in macroeconomic terms by donor governments and international development institutions bring increased suffering to families and children who are already the victims of ill-conceived development policies.

But our actions for children abroad are likely to be less direct and our prescriptions less detailed. We do not—and should not—control the internal policies of Third World governments. Yet the United States, representing nearly one third of the world's economic powers, cannot escape a heavy responsibility to those who do not benefit from the global economy, especially, in our view, its least responsible victims—the millions of desperate Third World children.

The fate of children, however, cannot be separated from the fate of their societies. As long as so many nations languish in poverty, the fate of many children will be grim. To overcome the legacy of neglect and mismanagement, indifference, and corruption will require new policies in our nation, in other affluent societies, and in the poor countries themselves.

The UN World Summit on Children and its Convention on the Rights of the Child outlined a constructive agenda for action. The promises made at that summit must be kept. The basic human rights of children must be respected and promoted, and their basic needs must be met. The agenda is long and comprehensive:

- shelter and relief for refugees and the homeless;
- food aid for disaster victims;
- medical treatment for the sick;
- maternal and child health programs;
- basic education and child care;
- improved nutrition; and
- the elimination of child labor, children in military service, and other exploitative practices.

But more fundamental reforms are necessary. Foreign policy, military policy, and international economic policy are also children's policies. Advocates for children need to be deeply involved in designing, implementing, and assessing international policy since the international economic system and the policies and practices that support and perpetuate it are taking the future of so many children hostage.

As recent papal encyclicals have pointed out, we need a new vision of solidarity in which poor children are seen not as remote issues or abstract problems, but as our sons and daughters, members of a global human family. We especially need to be their advocates here in the United States where global economic policy is so often made.

U.S. economic policy touches four key international economic relationships — trade, aid, finance, and investment.

- We need an *international trading system* that helps poor children by allocating the benefits of trade more equitably and ensures that poor countries receive fair prices for their exports. The exploitation of child labor for competitive advantage is essentially wrong; nor does it lead to authentic development. Unbridled competition is not an adequate or acceptable rationale for a trade policy; neither is selfish protectionism that simply restricts imports from the developing world.
- We need a *foreign aid program* that gives greater priority to the basic needs of families and children in the developing countries than to the national security or competitive advantage of the United Sates or the military appetites of Third World governments. Development must be understood and promoted in terms of helping poor people improve the quality of their lives and build for their future, rather than merely increasing the quantity of their possessions and their nation's military arsenal.
- We need a *global financial system* that looks at the human consequences of the massive external debt of the developing countries and realistically attempts to relieve it through a genuine sharing of responsibility among creditors and debtors. We cannot approach this problem as no more than a question of exchange rates, inflation, and debt service. This results in policies in the debtor countries that further punish children and others by reducing housing, education, transportation, and other public services. It also often deprives them of food in order to increase the export of agricultural products that will earn the foreign exchange required to pay external debts.
- And we need an *increase in both foreign and domestic investment* in developing countries which neither creates dependency nor enriches investors at the expense of poor families. Business firms in the United States and elsewhere have demonstrated many times that there is no intrinsic contradiction between the pursuit of reasonable profit and the realization of social and economic justice. It is neither moral nor necessary to invest in enterprises that injure or exploit natural resources or people, especially children.

There are other important priorities. We are required to address the continuing danger for children that comes with the still unresolved conflicts in the Middle East, Central America, and other parts of the world. The antichild and antifamily coercive population and abortion policies of some societies deserve our continued opposition. We cannot ignore the pervasive discrimination against women in some parts of the world which jeopardizes the lives of female infants and deprives girls of a promising future. Finally, the continuing human costs of the lethal international arms trade which robs children of opportunity and assistance require our active resistance as well. Our work for peace is a work for the children of the world since children pay a huge price for warfare. Catholic Relief Services and the UN report the terrible suffering of children in Iraq in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War. Our conference has joined with others

CNS KNA

Our work for peace is a work for the children of the world since children pay a huge price for warfare.

in advocating the restructuring of economic sanctions to pursue regional security and effective arms control without putting at risk the vulnerable children of Iraq.

Environmental concerns touch our children. The United Nations' 1990 report on "Children and the Environment" puts this point very succinctly: What do we owe these children — our children and our grandchildren? We owe them a planet fit to live on and capable of sustaining the future."

We also need to recognize fully the family dimensions of refugee and immigration policies, seeking to keep families together and to respect the rights and dignity of families driven from their homes by violence, oppression, or injustice.

In the international arena, as in the national, we need policies and programs aimed not only at solving problems, but also even more at preventing them. Preventive medicine is almost always less costly than other treatment, but foresight is also harder and less clear then hindsight. But we now know more clearly from experience how debt burdens accumulate, what kinds of investments create or perpetuate dependency, what sorts of development assistance programs work or do not work, and how trade practices harm working people and the poor here and abroad.

In our hearts, we know something is wrong as we watch children die on the nightly news. We need to link those heartbreaking pictures of hunger and desperation to the structures of debt and development, conflict and violence which contribute — directly or indirectly — to the death of those children. We can no longer remain indifferent. We need to respond not only with sadness and contributions, but with concrete commitment to seek change in the way the world treats children. Foreign policy is frequently children's policy and people who care for children need to be deeply involved in assessing the consequences of economic policy and military action for its impact on children. We need to see and hear more clearly the stories of our missionaries and Catholic Relief Services who share with us the terrible consequences of violence, poverty, debt, and injustice on the lives of children. We need to see Jesus in the hungry and helpless children who haunt our world.

VIII. A Call to Action

We are approaching the Third Millennium. Can we summon the will and the ways to make our families, our nation, and our world welcoming and decent places for our children? We hope the Catholic community will become a persistent, informed, and committed voice for children and families, urging all American institutions from neighborhood associations to the federal government to put our children first. Let us find life-giving and loving alternatives to the despair of abortion. Let us insist that by the year 2000 we will finally eliminate poverty among children in this affluent society, and we will have a world where children will no longer die of hunger. Let us support all families in their struggle to offer their children the values, help, and hope they need. Let us seek to break the cycle of poverty and destructive behavior which leaves so many children imprisoned.

1992 is an election year. While others are campaigning for public office, let us campaign for children. Let us insist that the needs of our children, all children, but especially unborn children and poor children, take first place in the dialogue over the values and vision that ought to guide our nation. Let us also campaign within our Church to develop a genuine family perspective in our own policies and programs and in our ministries and

CNS/Mimi Forsyth

We hope the Catholic community will become a persistent, informed, and committed voice for children and families, urging all American institutions from neighborhood associations to the federal government to put our children first.

services. As bishops we pledge to keep these concerns before our conference through our various committees and our offices so that we, too, move beyond rhetoric to action of behalf of our children.

We call on the institutions of Catholic life to join with us in continuing to reach out and support children and their parents. A great deal is already being done — in thousands of parishes and schools, in Catholic Charities, and diocesan programs. Let us build on this solid foundation to assess all our efforts from a family perspective and become even more effective sources of help and advocacy for children and families. In the months and years to come, let us with even greater urgency and commitment focus our pastoral care, direct our services, and lift our voices to enhance the life and dignity of all children, especially poor children.

It is not only poor children, however, who are vulnerable and in need of our concrete commitment, *all* children need our active concern. The children of affluence, too, can experience poverty, a spiritual and moral poverty according to Robert Coles, noted author and psychiatrist, and others. These children — indeed, all children — need parents who care enough about them to give them time, one of the surest measures of human love. They also need appropriate discipline, i.e., loving limits in which they can grow into mature men and women, who themselves are full of care for the next generation. And when parents are unable to fully meet their children's needs, other adults must demonstrate that children belong to a larger, loving community, and society at large must act to protect the life, dignity, and rights of all God's children.

In closing, we would like to say a special word to parents — a word of appreciation, gratitude, and hope. We recognize the joy and hope and occasional sadness and hurt that come with the difficult and exhilarating responsibility of being a good mother or father. Children challenge, but they also educate. They can open our eyes to new depths of spiritual and religious insight. They test our patience, touch our hearts, and fill our lives. We appreciate the sacrifice, care, and hard work that make a parent the clearest example of God's love in our midst.

IX. Conclusion

For generations, the Catholic community has reached out to children — to welcome them into our faith, to teach them, to serve their spiritual growth, and to offer food, shelter, and help at times of need. We have defended their right to life itself and their right to live with dignity, to realize the bright promise and opportunity of childhood. Now we renew this commitment and build on it. We seek to bring new hope and concrete help to a generation of children at risk. We seek to measure our ministry, our nation, and our world for the manner in which we protect the lives, dignity, and rights of all God's children.

This is a work of faith: a commitment of a community that believes that we are judged by our response to those most in need — poor and vulnerable children.

This is a work of hope: a commitment to the future, to the children who will shape the Church, the nation, and the world of tomorrow.

This is a work of love: a commitment to reach out and care for the children in our midst and around the world who desperately need our help.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus said, "Let the children come to me... (Lk 18:16)." Today, as his followers, we say let us put our children first; let us shape our families, churches, nation, and world to care for our most precious gift — our children.

Notes

1. Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* 50.

2. We define family here as "an intimate community of persons bound together by blood, marriage, or adoption for the whole of life. In our Catholic tradition, the family proceeds from marriage — an intimate, exclusive, permanent, and faithful partnership of husband and wife. This definition is intentionally normative and recognizes that the Church's normative approach is not shared by all (Ad Hoc Committee on Marriage and Family Life, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *A Family Perspective in Church and Society: A Manual for All Pastoral Leaders,*" 19).

3. Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio,* 17, 50.

4. Second Vatican Council, *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity,* 11.

5. *Familiaris Consortio,* 46.

Additional individual copies of the statement may be ordered from USCC Publishing Services. See page 84.

Discussion Questions

Putting Children and Families First

Our bishops call us to pay attention to our most precious resource -- our children -- in their recent pastoral, *Putting Children and Families First: A Challenge for Our Church, Nation and World.* This statement provides an essential platform for assessing the Church's response to contemporary situations impacting children and their families.

These discussion questions, prepared by the National Catholic Educational Association, can help Catholics as individuals, in small faith sharing groups, and in educational settings to study the document so as to analyze, and consequently respond to, the present-day needs of children and families. In the words of the bishops, we need "...to continue to reach out and support our children and families...to become even more effective sources of help and advocacy for them." (Putting Children and Families First)

Introduction (p. 9)

1. Does our society and world have "a clear priority for families and children?"
2. What are the "policies that help families protect their children's lives?" What are the "moral, social and economic forces that threaten their future?"
3. How can our parish, school or other groups reorder priorities to focus more on the current and potential needs of our children and their families?

The Realities (pp. 9-11)

1. What facts about our children and families were startling to you? What facts were not surprising? Why?
2. How are these realities reflected in the children and families in our community?
3. How has the "pattern of national neglect" shortchanged our children? Our families? Our nation?
4. How is the situation of children in the world, "a sign of moral failure and a religious test?"

The Moral and Religious Dimension (pp. 12-14)

How can we draw on the following three basic resources to shape our responses to children and their families?

1. Scriptures: To what responses do the Scriptures call us? Which of the scriptural passages cited has meaning for you and why?
2. Catholic Teaching: What key principles of Catholic teaching are violated with regard to children? Why are families so important to the protection and nurturing of children? Which tasks of families do we share and/or support? How do we recognize and support the diverse needs and strengths of families and children? How have economic and social policies impacted the strength and stability of family life? How have we been advocates for our children and families? How can we do this in the future?
3. Experience: How do our parish, school or other groups serve children and families? What have we learned from that experience? What more should we do?

The Moral Challenge (pp. 14-15)

1. What are the challenges for our families in this area?
2. For our parish? School? Other groups?
3. For our nation?
4. For the world?
5. How can we use "our values, voices and votes" to help children and families?

Criteria for National Policy (pp. 15-16)

1. How has the national discussion of families been polarized? How can we overcome political and social differences in the common cause of helping children and families?
2. The bishops say we need better values and better policies. Can you describe the values and policies we need?
3. Review the seven-point criteria. Suggest some policy changes that would reflect these criteria.

Directions for National Policy (pp. 16-22)

1. The bishops say traditional moral values are "not relics of a bygone age, but the guides for a productive future." How can traditional values shape a better future?
2. In the area of national policy, what changes are your highest priorities? What is needed to bring them about? How can we help bring them about?
3. The bishops urge changes in national policy. What changes are needed in our own local community; our parish, school, etc.?

International Dimension (pp. 22-24)

1. How is foreign policy children's policy?
2. How do our children and parishioners learn about and respond to the children of the world?
3. What can we do to respond to their needs?

A Call to Action and Conclusion (pp. 24-25)

1. How can we become "a persistent informed and committed voice for children and families?"
2. What are the three sweeping goals outlined in the statement? What would be our goals in responding to the statement?
3. The bishops say "While others are campaigning for office, let us campaign for children." How can we campaign for children and families in our own way?

Clip Art

Catholic Campaign for Children and Families

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Parish Planning Resources

"A great deal is already being done — in thousands of parishes and schools, in Catholic Charities, and diocesan programs. In the months and years to come, let us with even greater urgency and commitment focus our pastoral care, direct our services, and lift our voices to enhance the life and dignity of all children, especially poor children."

(Putting Children and Families First)

This parish planning resource was prepared by the USCC Campaign for Human Development and the Department of Social Development and World Peace to assist parish leaders, councils, staffs, and organizations to explore the implications of the Catholic Campaign for Children and Families for their parish.

Introduction

The call to "put children and families first" is not a new priority for parishes, but an everyday commitment. Children and families are at the heart of parish life and the parish plays a vital role in supporting families and nurturing children. Families and children are welcomed to the community in Baptism, nourished in Eucharist, reconciled in Penance, shaped in our schools and religious education efforts, and challenged and supported by a wide variety of pastoral, educational, spiritual, and social ministries.

This planning resource offers a series of questions to help you examine how you can participate in a Catholic Campaign for Children and Families, given the unique leadership, resources, and available time and energy of your parish. Inner-city, suburban, and rural parishes have differing needs, styles, and concerns. African American, Hispanic, and other minority parishes have special strengths and priorities. Parish participation can range from simply including quotes or clip art in your bulletin, to incorporating the theme of children and families in regular parish liturgies, activities, and programs. Between these two options are many possibilities. The role of a parish planning committee is to determine which activities will best serve your parish.

The materials included in this manual — the resources on liturgy, preaching, education, social ministry, bulletin quotes, clip art, etc. — are designed to complement this planning resource. They offer a wide range of ideas for programs and activities, from which you can choose those that are most appropriate for your parish.

Strategies

Two basic strategies can shape your parish's participation in a Catholic Campaign for Children and Families.

1. **Integration:** This approach focuses on how parishes can strengthen their current efforts and weave a Catholic Campaign for Children and Families into ongoing parish activities — the everyday tasks of worship, preaching, education, formation, pastoral care, advocacy, and empowerment.

2. **Special Initiatives:** A second strategy is to focus attention in a special way on the needs of children and families. Many parishes are planning, or are already carrying out, special liturgical celebrations, undertaking new educational programs, and initiating or strengthening their social ministry efforts focused on children and families.

(Michael Hoyt/Catholic Standard photo)

The *audience* for this resource is parish leaders: pastors, associate pastors, parish staff, parish councils, and committees, as well as other parish organizations. It can help diverse ministries work together on a common concern.

The *timeline* is open — this is not a priority for one month or one year. The campaign is a continuing challenge that will not be met by a week of activity or "a year of the child" or a "decade of the family." Nonetheless, certain liturgical seasons and holy days — for example Advent and the feasts of Christmas, Holy Family, and Epiphany — particularly lend themselves to a special focus on children and families.

Diocesan structures are key resources for a Catholic Campaign for Children and Families. Many are holding special convocations and educational events, launching new programs, or preparing resource materials. Diocesan offices can often provide ideas, speakers, and materials to assist parishes. A couple of impressive diocesan initiatives are summarized in the accompanying boxes. A variety of national resources are outlined later in this manual.

Parishes across this country are deeply involved in serving the pastoral and human needs of children and families. A Catholic Campaign for Children and Families is an opportunity to build on these many efforts and to bring our experience and convictions together in a comprehensive call to our Church, nation, and world to "put our children and families first."

Getting Started

The best way to begin is by bringing together parish leaders to discuss current efforts and new opportunities for focusing on children and families. This is not a task for a few, one committee, or a small segment of the parish. It is an opportunity to bring together many parish programs and ministries.

The concern for children and families touches the whole parish. It will be important to include the pastor, parish council and staff, including those responsible for religious education, liturgy, the school, social concerns, and others who might want to participate. If it is not possible to bring all parish leaders together at one time, resources and planning tools can be distributed to those responsible for various parish ministries for their own reflection and action. You may also want to obtain additional copies of *Putting Children and Families First.* It can be ordered by calling 800/235-USCC and requesting publication No. 469-4 ($1.95 each, bulk rates available), or by using the order form in this manual.

Washington: "Shareholders in Family Initiatives"

The Archdiocese of Washington has offered a creative plan for parishioners to get involved in meeting the needs of children and families. At a major Archdiocesan convocation, parish delegations were asked to become "shareholders" in nine innovative family projects:

1. A program to strengthen parish family life committees;
2. A year-long training in parenting skills developed with Boys Town;
3. An ecumenical religious group confronting the issues of children and families;
4. A Pro-Life Education Foundation supporting a referendum against a pro-abortion law;
5. Safe houses for homeless and/or abused Hispanic women and children;
6. A health clinic for a rural community's un(der)insured families;
7. A foster family program for troubled children;
8. A project involving prisoners building and rehabilitating houses for low income people;
9. A maternity home for care of newborns and childcare/vocational training of their mothers.

For additional information and materials, contact the Secretariat for Social Concerns, Archdiocese of Washington (301/853-4555).

General Planning

Here are some basic questions that can help you identify key parts of a parish plan. Given limitations of time and resources, you may want to choose one or two of these questions to focus your discussion.

1. What are the *needs* of children and families in your parish and community? How are you already responding to these needs?

2. What *opportunities* are there within the parish calendar to focus attention and emphasis on children and families?

3. What special events or existing *programs* can help the parish focus on children and families?

4. *Who* needs to be included in designing, planning, and implementing the programs? How can you incorporate the special gifts of diverse racial and ethnic groups in your parish?

5. What *tasks* need to be carried out to implement these activities? By whom?

6. What is a realistic *timeline* for each activity?

7. What *resources* are needed? What resources are already in place?

Worship

When we celebrate the Eucharist and hear the word of God, we are called and challenged to live our faith in our families and communities. Many parishes have found that liturgies are key opportunities to reflect our deep commitment to children and families. Liturgies can also provide important support for families struggling to apply Christian values in a society that often does not reflect these values. Families look to the Eucharist for the support and challenge they need to live our faith in the world.

Those involved in planning liturgies may want to consider one or more of the following ideas:

1. Reflecting our concern for children and families within the liturgy through prayers of petition, appropriate homilies, a regular or occasional family Mass, etc.

2. Identifying feasts and liturgical seasons that

lend themselves to a focus on children and families, including Advent and Christmas, Epiphany, and Holy Family.

3. Turning special collections (e.g., Campaign for Human Development, American Bishops' Overseas Appeal, etc.) into opportunities to educate, preach, and respond to the needs of poor children and families.

Additional resources for planning liturgies and homilies focused on children and families can be found on pages 35-40, and 65-74 respectively.

Education

Through parish religious education programs and Catholic schools, we deepen our understanding of our faith and young people are prepared to be responsible Christian adults. These programs can help communicate the importance of family life, develop loving and responsible family members, teach concern about others, especially poor children and vulnerable families, and reflect Catholic teaching on families, justice, and community.

Those involved in religious education programs and Catholic schools may want to consider one or more of the following ideas:

1. Incorporating the concern for children and families contained in Scriptures and Catholic teaching into ongoing religious education programs and school curricula.

2. Encouraging students to learn about and offer service to poor children and families as part of their religious education program.

3. Sponsoring special projects such as poster contests, essay contests, field trips to local agencies serving needy children, etc.

4. Using local resources such as Campaign for Human Development-funded groups and Catholic Charities service programs to enrich education efforts.

5. Offering adult education on parenting or public issues.

Additional resources for those planning parish to religious education programs and Catholic school curricula can be found on pages 41-44.

St. Paul/Minneapolis: "Blest be the Children"

The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis has developed an impressive parish program called "Blest be the Children." The initiative includes a short version of the bishops' statement, specific parish resources on education, advocacy and services, training for parish leaders, media events, public service spots, and other activities.

The parish kit can be obtained for $10.00 from the Office for Social Justice, Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis, 328 West Kellogg Street, St. Paul, MN 55102 (612/291-4477).

Social Ministry

Our faith calls us to service of those in need and action for justice. The needs of children and families hold a special place in Catholic social teaching and in the hearts of most Catholics. Efforts to respond to those needs represent opportunities to expand participation in the social ministry of the parish. In addition, action on behalf of vulnerable children and families demonstrates Catholics' faith and commitment to the larger community and our family values.

Those involved in parish social ministry programs may want to consider one or more of the following ideas:

> ***...Action on behalf of vulnerable children and families demonstrates Catholics' faith and commitment to the larger community and our family values.***

1. Identifying the pressing needs of children and families in the community, and recognizing how your parish is already responding to those needs or could respond.

2. Initiating a new service program for the parish as a whole, such as providing a regular meal for a soup kitchen, service in a local family shelter, sponsoring clothing and food distributions, organizing parent support and education groups, or offering child care in parish facilities.

3. Sharing with parish members service opportunities for individuals or families such as volunteering time at a shelter, serving at a soup kitchen, donating to a children's program, "sponsoring" a child from a developing country, or volunteering for a literacy program.

4. Educating parishioners about public policies on the local, national, or international level that work against children and families (e.g., cuts in assistance to poor children, pro-abortion policies, inadequate family and medical leave policies, etc.) You could also involve parishioners in advocating on behalf of vulnerable children and families by joining a diocesan or state legislative network, a local community organization, or by launching your own letter-writing or telephone campaign.

Additional ideas for social ministry activities can be found on pages 45-54.

Family Life

Across the country parishes are finding creative ways to support families and deepen awareness of their needs. Here are some other activities they are undertaking:

- including a short informational item about children and families or a quote from the bishops' statement, *Putting Children and Families First*, in their bulletin every week (see sample bulletin inserts in this manual);
- hosting a family resource Sunday with representatives of various family support agencies and organizations;
- sponsoring regular family activity nights that can focus on recreation programs, prayer services, educational sessions, or serving families in need;
- using the quiz and the timeline on page 33 as bulletin inserts to raise awareness of the issues;
- using the video, *I Am Only A Child*, at parish gatherings — parish council, adult education, school sessions, RCIA, sacramental preparation classes, etc.;
- planning a special Sunday with worship focused on children and families, education on forces which undermine families, and service and advocacy on behalf of vulnerable children and families.

Timeline

Parish planners must be clear not only about *what* is going to happen, but also *when* it will happen. Nothing is more discouraging than to host a great event that no one attends because something else occurred at the same time. To assist in the development of a timeline, the following considerations and calendar are offered:

1. Examine your parish calendar. Identify the parish events and liturgical seasons that you would like to include in your plan for a special focus on children and families.

2. A review of the following list of seasonal church activities and holidays may be helpful as you choose key events or seasons for focusing on children and families. Often, activities that you are asked to support (e.g., special collections such as the Campaign for Human Development and the American Bishop's Overseas Appeal) can be excellent opportunities for education and action.

Church and Special Events

One or more of the following events may be appropriate opportunities to focus on children and families in your parish:

> *The* **timeline** *is open — this is not a priority for one month or one year. The campaign is a continuing challenge that will not be met by a week of activity or "a year of the child" or a "decade of the family."*

Fall

- School begins
- Respect Life Month (October)
- All Saints/All Souls
- Election Day
- Campaign for Human Development Collection
- Thanksgiving

Winter

- Advent
- Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Immaculate Conception
- Christmas
- Epiphany
- New Year's Day/World Day of Peace
- National Migration Week
- Martin Luther King Day

Spring

- Lent
- Catholic Relief Services' Rice Bowl Collection
- Easter
- Pentecost
- American Bishops' Overseas Appeal

Summer

- End of school year/Graduation
- Fourth of July
- 1993 World Youth Day (Holy Father's Visit to Denver)

Bulletin Inserts

Key facts on children and families are highlighted in the two sample bulletin inserts which accompany this resource. You may want to adapt them by including local facts, or use them in this form.

Questions about Children that Every Catholic Should be Able to Answer

1. How many American children live in poverty?
2. How many children are homeless in America right now?
3. What percentage of African American children are poor?
4. Are the majority of poor children white or black?
5. How many children's lives are lost through abortion in the United States each year?
6. How many children in the U.S. die every day from the effects of poverty?
7. What is the average welfare payment (per person, per day) for a destitute family with children?
8. For every $1 invested in programs like HeadStart, how much do U.S. taxpayers save in later education, welfare, and crime costs?
9. Which of these countries has the highest infant mortality rate: Austria, Ireland, Spain, Hong Kong, or the United States?
10. Do most poor families with children receive more income from welfare or from work?

Answers

1. More than 12 million. **2.** Approximately 100,000. **3.** Forty-three percent. **4.** White, but minorities make up a disproportionate number of children in poverty. **5.** 1.6 million. **6.** 27. **7.** $4.16 per person, per day. **8.** $4.75. **9.** The United States. **10.** Over two-thirds of America's poor families with children receive twice as much income from work as they do from welfare.

Every Sunday... as we wake up, 100,000 American children wake up homeless.

Every hour... while we attend Mass, 183 children's lives are lost to abortion in America.

Every 14 minutes... while we listen to the sermon or homily, a baby dies in America.

Every 32 seconds... about the time it takes us to say the Lord's Prayer, an American baby is born into poverty.

Every 64 seconds... while we "pass the peace," a baby is born to a teenage mother.

And every 13 hours... before we go back to sleep that night, an American preschooler is murdered.

A CATHOLIC
CHILDREN
AND
FAMILIES
FIRST
CAMPAIGN

Liturgical Resources

> *"In our churches we need to help families in their essential roles, offering both support and challenge. This requires liturgy and pastoral care responsive to children and families.... We need to lift up the vocation of marriage and family life and offer to people the resources of our spiritual and sacramental heritage in effective and creative ways."*
>
> (Putting Children and Families First)

This resource is designed to help parishes incorporate the theme of children and families into their liturgies. Suggestions are offered for involving families in the Mass; including this theme in prayers of petition, homilies, music, etc.; and highlighting the role of families in sacramental preparation and celebrations of the sacraments. Two examples – Thanksgiving Day and the Feast of the Holy Family – are used to illustrate how this theme can be incorporated into particular feast days.

General Suggestions

Putting children and families first in the liturgy provides both an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity is to rededicate ourselves to developing programs and celebrations that draw those who claim the title "Children of God" more fully into the death and resurrection of Christ. The challenge is to fashion those same programs and celebrations so that they speak authentically of Gospel imperatives and the Church's tradition while recognizing varying levels of faith development. The following ideas and suggestions are meant to encourage local initiative and creativity in meeting this challenge and realizing this opportunity.

It is important that balance be achieved between those elements of the liturgy directed toward children and those toward adults. As the *Directory for Masses with Children* (DMC) states, "The witness of adult believers can have a great effect upon the children. Adults can in turn benefit spiritually from experiencing the part that the children have within the Christian community. The Christian spirit of family is greatly fostered when children take part in these Masses together with their parents and other family members." The question then is how to highlight the involvement of children and families.

(John Capobianco photo)

The DMC lists several possibilities. Children and parents, at times individually, at times together, can prepare the place and the altar, act as cantor, sing in a children's or family choir, play musical instruments, proclaim the readings, read the general intercessions, serve as ushers, and perform other duties according to what is recommended in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. Fathers and sons together can assist as altar servers. Mothers and daughters can bring gifts to the altar. Active and conscious participation can be even more significant when children and families are of service together.

The parish liturgy committee, in consultation with the parish priest, can also design other programs that are outlined in the liturgical documents.

At a principal Sunday Mass, a children's Liturgy of the Word can be designed. The children are called to the altar after the Introductory Rites. After words of encouragement, they are sent out with a catechist and the Scriptures (the *Lectionary for Masses with Children* will be published later this year) to celebrate the Liturgy of the Word in a way more intelligible to them. They return during the Preparation of the Altar and Presentation of Gifts. At one parish, the congregation sends the children to their separate gathering place with the words, "May the Lord be with you there." The children respond, "May the Lord be with you here." Of course, these

The Rite of Baptism allows the Church to make the connection between the nuclear family and larger family of believers responsible for the faith formation of an infant.

celebrations for children rely on well-trained catechists and musicians.

Programs of sacramental preparation and the celebration of sacraments can also be family centered. The Rite of Baptism allows the Church to make the connection between the nuclear family and larger family of believers responsible for the faith formation of an infant. Gathering the family around the baptismal font, letting the older children touch the water and smell the chrism, and having others help dress the infant in the white baptismal garment highlight the role of the family.

> ***The Christian spirit of family is greatly fostered when children take part in these Masses together with their parents and other family members.***

The recently approved *Rite of Christian Initiation of Children Who Have Reached Catechetical Age* as put forth in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* challenges a parish to use many of its gifts for the full initiation of young people. It parallels the adult initiation ritual. Children are publicly enrolled in the Catechumenate, they study, reflect, and are challenged. They are presented to the Bishop when their faith is sufficiently mature for Baptism, Confirmation, and first Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. They continue the process through the period of mystogogy or postbaptismal catechesis. Practically, the way to begin is by simply reading the ritual itself. And then dive in. Experience is one of the wisest counselors with this rite, although resources are developing rapidly in response to the promulgation of this rite.

The celebration of First Communion and the Rite of Confirmation are also opportunities to strengthen the family by highlighting the significance of children.

These are not one-time endeavors. Rather they are the continuing work of the Church throughout the course of the liturgical year. They require time, commitment, and a willingness to respond to the invitation to live out our faith for the development of others.

Sample General Intercessions

In any liturgy it is appropriate to pray for children and families. The following examples include general intercessions that can be used at any time, as well as suggestions for specific feasts. The needs and hopes of families in the local community should guide the preparation of general intercessions in each parish.

Priest: God calls us to be his children. Let us then place our needs and the needs of all people before the Father as we seek the reign of God.

Priest/Deacon or another minister: For the Church and those who lead it, especially N., our pope, and N., our bishop, that together the Christ's message of victory over sin and death will be proclaimed with integrity and conviction.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Priest/Deacon or another minister: That nations throughout the world may work together for peace through respect for the needs of the young, the old, and those most wanting.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Priest/Deacon or another minister: That our leaders may have the wisdom and courage to shape a society that puts our children and families first.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Priest/Deacon or another minister: For parents, those who guard their children with love beyond all telling, that they may receive the rich reward of their self-sacrifice, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Priest/Deacon or another minister: For parents and families, especially those struggling with poverty, unemployment, illness, and substance abuse, that God's people will defend their rights and work to meet their needs.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Priest/Deacon or another minister: For children, that through the dedication of parents, families, teachers, and ministers, they will be protected from all harm allowing them to develop their full human potential.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Feast of the Holy Family:

Priest/Deacon or another minister: For our families, that they will be supportive of our Catholic faith promoting human values of love and compassion, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Thanksgiving Day (USA):

Priest/Deacon or another minister: That our nation will work to care for those most in need, especially our children, so that the integrity of our families will be strengthened.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Priest: God of love and mercy, hear our prayers for your people, those spoken and those that lie deep in our hearts. May our words and actions always proclaim your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Ideas for Preparing Liturgies

Feast of the Holy Family:
Sunday, December 27, 1992

Introduction

The Holy Family is not so much unlike our families. Jesus, with his mother Mary and stepfather Joseph, knew the hope and joy that all families experience. They also knew that families need the constant care of God. The readings today speak to the fiber of family life. Love is complex but consistent. God's presence in Christ's victory over sin and death holds the promise that sets us free.

Penitential Rite

Priest/Deacon: Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations into the family of God. Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Priest/Deacon: Lord Jesus, you are Son of God and Son of Mary. Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Priest/Deacon: Lord Jesus, you are hope for all generations. Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

Introductory Comments to the Readings

First reading, Sirach 3:2-6;12-14. The subject of the entire third chapter of the book of Sirach is the family. The maxims contained in these verses make it clear that love involves honor, reverence, comfort, and care. These are the qualities that not only bind the family, but flow from the family.

Second reading, Colossians 3:12-21. The ideal Christian life involves more than the renunciation of all that keeps us from knowing and loving God. It involves a standard of love of neighbor for which all are to strive. Paul tells the Colossians that our relationship, both inside the family and outside, are to be marked by a quality that could only be described as perfect.

Gospel, Matthew 2:13-15;19-23. The protection of a child is instinct for parents. Whether it is Mary and Joseph saving Jesus from the wrath of Herod or a young couple holding their newborn close to their heart. The Lord asks that we go to extremes to protect the innocent. They are messengers of God's love.

Blessing of Family Members

Various rites and prayers of blessings for families and family members can be found in *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers* (USCC Publishing Services, No. 220-9, 1988). One example, the Blessing for a Family or Household, follows.

This rite may be used annually on a day of special significance to a family, or at times when members of the family who live far apart have come together, or at times when the family experiences special difficulties or special joys. The leader may be someone from outside the family (a priest, deacon, or lay minister) or may be one of the family members. The blessing may be given at a family meal or another appropriate time.

All make the sign of the cross. The leader begins:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all, now and for ever.

R. Amen.

The leader may use these words or words directed to the specific occasion to introduce the blessing:

We are a family. For one another, we are love and trial, strength and trouble. Even when far apart, we belong to one another and, in various ways, we remember and pray for one another. We join now to give thanks to God and to ask God's blessing on this family (those who are present and those who are not here).

Then the Scripture is read:

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul to the Colossians: Colossians 3:12-17. (The family's Bible may be used for an alternate reading such as Ephesians 4:1-6 or 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:7.)

The reader concludes:

The Word of the Lord.

All respond:

Thanks be to God.

After a time of silence, all offer prayers of intercession, remembering especially those who have died. Then all join hands for the Lord's Prayer.

The leader says the prayer of blessing:

A. O God,
you have created us in love and saved us in mercy,
and through the bond of marriage
you have established the family
and willed that it should become a sign
of Christ's love for his Church.

Shower your blessings on this family
gathered here in your name.
Enable those who are joined by one love
to support one another
by their fervor of spirit and devotion to prayer.
Make them responsive to the needs of others
and witnesses to the faith in all they say and do.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.

Or:

B. In good times and in bad,
in sickness and in health,
we belong to each other
as we belong to you, God ever faithful.
By morning and by night
may your name be on our lips,
a blessing to all our days:
so may kindness and patience be ever among us,
a hunger for justice,
and songs of thankfulness in all we do.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.

The leader may sprinkle all with holy water, or each one may take holy water and make the sign of the cross.

The leader concludes:

May the Lord Jesus,
who lived with his holy family in Nazareth,
dwell also with your (our) family,
keep it from all evil,
and make all of you (us) one in heart and mind.
R. Amen.

The leader says:

Let us bless the Lord.

All respond, making the sign of the cross:

Thanks be to God.

The blessing may conclude with singing "Now Thank We All Our God," or another appropriate song.

> ***The needs and hopes of families in the local community should guide the preparation of general intercessions in each parish.***

Thanksgiving Day (USA): Thursday, November 26, 1992

Introduction

Today families gather throughout our nation to give thanks for the goodness God has shown us. For us it is a special holiday, with special food and special people. There is always room for one more at the table because this is a day when all become part of the family. The Lord welcomes us the same way. As God cares for us, we are charged with caring for our neighbors. Through working to heal the wounds that divide and to remove the barriers that keep people from even the basic necessities of life, such as food, shelter, and love, we work to proclaim the reign of God.

Penitential Rite

Priest/Deacon: Lord Jesus, you healed the sick. Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Priest/Deacon: Lord Jesus, you forgave sinners. Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Priest/Deacon: Lord Jesus, you give us yourself to heal us and bring us strength. Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

Introductory Comments to the Readings

First reading, Sirach 50: 22-24. Sirach blesses God for the great things on earth. Numbered among the greatest are the people who give and support life. Our joy is one with Sirach as we gather with children, grandchildren, and our families today.

Second reading, 1 Corinthians 1:3-9. We should never stop thanking God for goodness we are shown. Even if we find ourselves alone today, we know that with others, especially the children and senior citizens, we are one in the family of God's people. Living in gratitude for God's goodness leads us to holiness.

Gospel, Luke 17:11-19. The people we least suspect often show us the face of God. St. Luke mentions a foreigner who returns after being cured to give thanks.

> ***Through working to heal the wounds that divide and to remove the barriers that keep people from even the basic necessities of life, such as food, shelter, and love, we work to proclaim the reign of God.***

Prayer at the Thanksgiving Dinner Table:

Lord, we thank you
for the goodness of our people
and for the spirit of justice
that fills this nation.
We thank you for the beauty and fullness of the land and the challenge of the cities.
We thank you for our work and our rest,
for one another, and for our families and homes.

(Pause for other prayers of thanksgiving.)

For all that we have spoken
and for all that we keep in our hearts,
accept our thanksgiving on this day.

We pray and give thanks through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Other Prayers

1. *From USCC Pro-Life Manual*

All glory and praise to you, O God.
Your abundant love is revealed to us
in the love of man and woman through which you establish the human family.
Your only Son was born of Mary
and was raised by her and Joseph the carpenter.
Grant that every household may be a place
where your children grow in wisdom and grace.
Make of all humanity one family to praise you
in Christ Jesus, our Lord and brother. *Amen.*

Blessing and honor to you, O God.
You give the spark of life and we are created.
May the fire of your love
fill every heart tempted by despair.
May the light of your wisdom
enlighten every mind threatened by fear
Protect every beginning of human life,
that every creature may praise your name.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

From the lips of children and babes,
the praise of all creation rises to you,
O God of compassion and mercy.
Give us the mind of Jesus
that we too may bless all children
in our strong yet gentle care for them.
Set before us day after day
the gracious love of the Mother of God
that we may nurture and protect these little ones.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

2. Adapted from Ina J. Hughs, in *Children 1990*, Children's Defense Fund, Washington, D.C., 1990.

A Prayer for Children

We pray for children
who sneak popsicles before supper,
who erase holes in math workbooks,
who can never find their shoes.

And we pray for those
who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire,
who can't bound down the street in a new pair of sneakers,
who never "counted potatoes,"
who are born in places we wouldn't be caught dead,
who never go to the circus,
who live in an X-rated world.

We pray for children
who bring us sticky kisses & fistfuls of dandelions,
who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money.

And we pray for those
who never get dessert,
who have no safety blanket to drag behind them,
who watch their parents watch them die,
who can't find any bread to steal,
who don't have any rooms to clean up,
whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser,
whose monsters are real.

We pray for children
who spend all their allowance before Tuesday,
who throw tantrums in the grocery store & pick at their food,
who like ghost stories,
who shove dirty clothes under the bed and never rinse out the tub,
who get visits from the tooth fairy,
who don't like to be kissed in front of the carpool,
who squirm in church or temple & scream in the phone,
whose tears we sometimes laugh at and
whose smiles can make us cry.

And we pray for those
whose nightmares come in the daytime,
who will eat anything,
who have never seen a dentist,
who aren't spoiled by anybody,
who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep,
who live and move, but have no being.

We pray for children who want to be carried and
for those who must,
for those we never give up on and
for those who don't get a second chance.

For those we smother...and for those who will
grab the hand of anybody kind enough to offer it.

Children's Litany

From the Worship Resources section of the *Blest Be the Children* packet developed by the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis, 1992.

Leader: The children will yet say in your ears, "The place is too narrow for me. Make room for me to dwell in." (Isaiah 49:20)

All: Blest be the children.

Leader: "Speak out for those who cannot speak for the rights of the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy." (Proverbs 31:8-9)

All: Blest be the children.

Leader: "Would any of you who are parents give your child a stone when they ask for bread?" (Matthew 7:9)

All: Blest be the children.

Leader: Jesus sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." Then he took a child and put it among them; "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not only me but the one who sent me." (Mark 9:35-37)

All: Best be the children.

Leader: "The Eternal, the Eternal, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means cleansing the guilty but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children's children, to the third and fourth generations." (Exodus 34:6-7)

All: Blest be the children.

Leader: The children will yet say in your ears, "This place is too narrow for me. Make room for me to dwell." (Isaiah 49:20)

All: Blest be the children.

Catholic Schools Resources

"Adequate preschool, primary and secondary education is essential to full development of our children. Society at large is increasingly recognizing the effectiveness of Catholic schools in meeting the educational needs of children, including poor and minority children."

(Putting Children and Families First)

(CNS/Mike Lavallee photo)

This resource was prepared by the USCC Department of Education to help school principals, faculties, and parent groups incorporate the Church's teachings on children and families into their curricula and programs.

The Catholic community has wonderful assets and resources in our Catholic schools. Our schools provide a unique opportunity to assist children with their own spiritual and academic development and to encourage children and families to learn about, and act upon, the needs of vulnerable children and families in developing nations as well as our own country.

Catholic Social Teaching

The bishops' statement *Putting Children and Families First* offers valuable material for staff development in several forums:

1. "The Lessons of Scripture" give the biblical texts that form the Christian tradition's approach toward children. Use these texts to design a faculty retreat or day of reflection. The texts could also provide an opening prayer or material for a brief discussion at the beginning of a faculty meeting. Such activities will focus the faculty on "who" they are teaching and the pride of place that children hold in the Church.

2. From "The Realities," present to the faculty the "sad facts of our national life" and facilitate a discussion. Many of these "sad facts" are present in the lives of your own school population. This realization will assist the faculty to know and teach these children better.

3. Provide guest speakers for some faculty meetings throughout the year (e.g., pediatrician, child psychologist, nutritionist, social worker), to raise awareness among the faculty of the signs of hunger, abuse, emotional problems, etc., so that the school, where necessary, may intervene to prevent additional harm and act as advocate for the children.

4. Faculty groups may combine the "Criteria for National Policy" with the "Lessons of Scripture" for a session leading to research and action on a particular issue. A similar discussion could be woven around the "Teaching of the Church" section and the basic "Criteria for National Policy" section.

5. Discussion questions for *Putting Children and Families First* have been prepared by the National Catholic Educational Association and can be found on the last page of the document.

Personal contact is a necessity in forming caring, compassionate Christians.

Integrating a Focus on Children and Families

1. Explore opportunities to include our social teaching on children and families in various curriculum areas such as social studies, religion, reading, etc. Some ways to accomplish this may be to invite missionaries, Peace Corps volunteers, and others in your community who have travelled or are native to other countries to speak with the children and share their experiences, pictures, slides, etc. You may also want to invite a speaker from a local group funded by the Campaign for Human Development (CHD) to discuss their efforts to address problems in the community. CHD has developed a variety of educational materials for children and adults. Your diocesan education office, social action office, CHD

director, or Catholic Relief Services (CRS) director can help identify speakers and materials.

2. Provide educational opportunities for children to learn about children and cultures of developing nations. One resource is the Holy Childhood Association (HCA). Children in grades K-8 can become a part of HCA through the Membership Program. Members who have fulfilled their $1 annual dues receive a membership card, a bookmark with the official HCA prayer, and a quarterly newsletter for use alone or with seasonal (Halloween, Lent, and Advent) programs. The *It's Our World* newsletter and teacher guide join stories about children in developing countries with seasonal and cultural information and activities. The HCA seals program, which includes Christmas and other festive seals, offers a chance for schools and parishes to raise funds for both local and international benefit. For more information contact HCA (202/775-8637).

> ***It is important to put a human face on poverty, sickness, etc., especially for children.***

3. Use the video, *I Am Only A Child*, to open a discussion on children and families. An order form is included in this resource manual.

4. Promote a commitment to charity and justice, which is expressed in generosity to those in need, and an intolerance of injustice. Your diocesan offices of social action, African American Catholics, and Hispanic Affairs can offer ideas for exploring issues of justice and celebrating diversity. Additional information is available through the NCCB/USCC departments of Social Development (202/541-3195), African American Catholics (202/541-3177), and Hispanic Affairs (202/541-3150).

Outreach Opportunities

It is important to put a human face on poverty, sickness, etc., especially for children. Personal contact is a necessity in forming caring, compassionate Christians. The following suggestions may be used by various age groups in the school:

1. In *Putting Children and Families First*, the bishops call us to "... a commitment to reach out and care for the children in our midst and around the world who desperately need our help." This calls for sacrifice on the part of the First World. Exchanging a party or an outing for an outreach to those in need is a valuable learning experience for children.

2. Many cities have groups of doctors sponsoring medical care for children from developing countries. These children often need friends, cards, and visits while they are recuperating. Contact local hospitals for information regarding such groups in your area as well as inquiring about assistance for other hospitalized children. Classes in your school could adopt this as a project.

3. Classes could adopt a child in need, providing friendship, assistance, letters, etc. Valuable lifetime lessons can be learned from such contact.

4. Students can learn about the needs of poor children and families locally by visiting a social service agency (e.g., day care center, homeless shelter, soup kitchen, etc.) or taking responsibility for a service project (e.g., cooking a meal for a soup kitchen, preparing Christmas gifts for a homeless shelter). Your diocesan social action office or Catholic Charities agency can provide additional ideas.

5. Children can learn about the Church's teaching on political responsibility and Catholics' role in shaping policies affecting children and families by participating in letter-writing campaigns or other activities sponsored by a diocesan or state legislative network. Contact your diocesan social action director, pro-life director, or State Catholic Conference director to obtain information.

Family Events

1. Sponsor educational opportunities for parents through PTA or Home and School meetings to assist them in raising their children. Speakers from various disciplines providing information and help to parents in the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of their children are always appreciated by parents.

2. Provide a forum for parents to discuss the various aspects of raising children and to receive support from other parents.

3. Plan events for families that create opportunities for recreational, social, and spiritual nourishment, e.g., a class retreat including parents and children, sporting events that are inclusive of all, and suppers with a video and discussion for the children and their parents.

For additional ideas and resources to help schools join the Catholic Campaign for Children and Families, contact your diocesan education office.

Religious Education Resources

A CATHOLIC
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FIRST
CAMPAIGN

"For decades, even centuries, the Catholic community has been deeply involved in meeting the human, pastoral and educational needs of children and their families...through parish religious education and adult education, we provide ongoing programs of marriage preparation and enrichment, natural family planning, family ministry, youth ministry and parenting skills."
(Putting Children and Families First)

This resource was prepared by the USCC Department of Education to help parish religious education programs integrate the Church's teachings about children and families into their curricula.

Religious education plays a vital role in helping us deepen our faith and recognize how we can act on that faith in our families and communities. Many opportunities exist for religious education programs to focus on Catholic social teaching regarding children and families. Religious education can also offer important experiences that demonstrate the Catholic commitment to "putting children and families first."

Catholic Social Teaching

The bishops' statement, *Putting Children and Families First*, has many sections that offer in-service material for catechists of children, youth, and adults:

1. "The Lessons of Scripture" give the biblical texts that form the Christian tradition's attitude toward children. Present several of these texts at an in-service workshop or retreat to give catechists background for their work with children.

2. From "The Realities," present to catechists the "sad facts of our national life." Facilitate a discussion of the facts with catechists. Many of these "sad facts" are present in the lives of parish children and families, and this realization will help catechists to know and teach these children better.

3. Adult discussion groups may combine the "Criteria for National Policy" with the "Lessons of Scripture" for a session leading to research and action on a particular issue. A similar discussion could be woven around the "Teaching of the Church" section and the basic "Criteria for National Policy." This will work well with youth groups also.

4. Detailed discussion questions for *Putting Children and Families First* have been prepared by the National Catholic Educational Association and can be found on the last page of the document.

5. The video, *I Am Only A Child*, can be used to initiate discussions for youth and adults. See the order form in this booklet.

Sacramental Preparation

Sacramental preparation for Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation could include an invitation to parents to honor their own children on these occasions by reaching out to a child in need, i.e., one who is homeless, sick, or in poverty. Contact with these children could begin at the time of the celebration and continue. Resources for contact with children in need in the local area can often be provided by your diocesan social action office or Catholic Charities agency.

(Michael Hoyt/Catholic Standard photo)

Family Events

Parishes can sponsor events for religious education families that unite families in spiritual or recreational activities (retreats, festivals, potlucks, prayer, crafts, song, dance, drama, stories for all ages, etc.).

Outreach Opportunities

It is important to put a human face on poverty, sickness, etc., especially for children. Personal contact is a necessity in forming caring, compassionate Christians. The following suggestions may be used by various age groups in the parish and/or be intergenerational outreach activities:

1. Provide educational opportunities for children to learn about children and cultures of developing nations. One resource is the Holy Childhood Association (HCA). Children in grades K-8 can become a part of HCA through the Membership Program. Members who have fulfilled their $1 annual dues

receive a membership card, a bookmark with the official HCA prayer, and a quarterly newsletter for use alone or with seasonal (Halloween, Lent, and Advent) programs. The *It's Our World* newsletter and teacher guide join stories about children in developing countries with seasonal and cultural information and activities. The HCA seals program, which includes Christmas and other festive seals, offers a chance for schools and parishes to raise funds for both local and international benefit. For more information contact HCA (202/775-8637).

2. Many cities have groups of doctors sponsoring medical care for children from developing countries. These children often need friends, cards, visits, etc., while they are recuperating. Contact local hospitals for information regarding such groups in your area as well as information about assistance for other hospitalized children.

3. Youth and adults may befriend a family in need, meeting with the family, offering friendship as well as assistance. Planning how to help offers invaluable lifetime lessons to youth from adult experience and expertise.

4. Plan events for disabled children of the parish or area with youth and adults. Such events also provide respite care for families of disabled children.

5. In *Putting Children and Families First*, the bishops call us to "...a commitment to reach out and care for the children in our midst and around the world who desperately need our help." This calls for sacrifice on the part of the First World. Exchanging a party or an outing for an outreach to those in need is a valuable learning experience for children and youth.

Additional outreach opportunities can be found in the Social Ministry section of this manual.

World Youth Day

Pope John Paul II has invited young adults and youths of the world (ages 13-30) to gather in Denver, Colorado, in August 1993. His message: Proclaim, celebrate, and live the words of Jesus as reflected in the 1993 World Youth Day theme: "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." (John: 10:10)

What is World Youth Day? It's worship; fellowship; catechesis; faith sharing. It's an international meeting held every other year that began in 1985 when the Pope invited young people to join in a special celebration of their faith and youthfulness. In 1993, World Youth Day will take place for the first time in the United States.

What Can You Do?

World Youth Day is an excellent opportunity to focus on the youths of the parish, celebrate their unique contributions, and reach out to other youths in the community. Parishes can prepare for and participate in World Youth Day 1993 in a variety of ways:

1. Establish a scholarship fund to help send youths of the parish to Denver in August 1993. Your diocesan youth ministry office can tell you about any diocesan plans to coordinate travel.
2. Encourage your diocese to plan World Youth Day events locally for those who cannot go to Denver. These can include such activities as a liturgy, educational programs, service projects, and a "walk for youth" or pilgrimage.
3. Plan parish events for those who cannot go to Denver. These can include a liturgy, educational programs, service projects, or a picnic.
4. Reach out to (evangelize) youths outside the parish by inviting them to your ongoing youth activities.
5. Make a special effort to involve youths in all parish ministries and activities.

Two resources that can help you plan youth activities are: 1992 World Youth Day Resource Book, *Live the Faith, Share the Story!* No. 499-6, and *A Vision of Youth Ministry,* No. 107-5 (USCC Office for Publishing and Promotion Services, 800/235-USCC).

Yes! I would like to learn more about World Youth Day and how my parish can participate.

Name: ______________________________

Address: ______________________________

Phone: ______________________________

Please return to: World Youth Day Office, 3211 Fourth St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017 (202/541-3001).

Social Ministry Resources

A CATHOLIC
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FIRST
CAMPAIGN

"We seek to shape a society — and a world — with a clear priority for families and children in need and to contribute to the development of policies that help families protect their children's lives and overcome the moral, social, and economic forces that threaten their future."

(Putting Children and Families First)

This resource is designed to offer parish social ministry leaders a wide range of social ministry ideas from which they can choose those that are best suited to their parish. It contains:

- *an introduction and information on vehicles for social ministry;*
- *resources for outreach and charitable activities; and*
- *ideas for working on public policy.*

It was prepared jointly by the USCC Department of Social Development and World Peace, the Campaign for Human Development, Migration and Refugee Services, the NCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, as well as the Catholic Health Association, the National Council of Catholic Women, the Holy Childhood Association, and the Catholic Near East Welfare Association.

Introduction

A major arena for supporting children and families is parish social ministry. Our religious convictions come alive in outreach to families in need, in advocacy for vulnerable children, and in organizing against forces that undermine families. These efforts to serve and stand up for children and families are a work of faith; they help us move from strong words about children and families to creative action. The Catholic Campaign for Children and Families represents a great opportunity to affirm, strengthen and broaden parish social ministry efforts.

The materials which follow outline many possible activities from which your social concerns committee can identify those that best suit your parish. They also identify diocesan and national contacts that can help you implement any activities you choose to pursue.

This resource suggests ways parishioners can:

- serve families and children in need through giving time, talents, or resources to ministries which meet the needs of families in the local community, the nation, or the world;
- advocate on behalf of poor children and vulnerable families. Public policy helps or hurts children and parents. We need to use our voices and votes to defend their lives, dignity, and rights; and
- organize families to speak for themselves. By participating in and supporting community organizations, parishioners empower families to make a difference in the public arena.

Vehicles

One of the most important factors in successful social ministry is finding the right "vehicles" or organizations through which parishioners can act. Three key vehicles — social concerns committees, legislative networks, and community organizations — are described below.

> ***Our religious convictions come alive in outreach to families in need, in advocacy for vulnerable children, and in organizing against forces that undermine families.***

Social Concerns Committees

Many parishes have social concerns committees with a great deal of commitment, experience, and knowledge. The best of these committees have several common characteristics:

- they include people from a wide range of parish groups and interests (e.g., parish councils, sodality, men's groups, peace groups, pro-life groups, etc.);
- they are directly tied to the central life and planning of the parish through the parish council and the support of the pastor;
- they *enable others* in the parish to participate in at least three types of activities: (1) direct services to people in need; (2) education on public issues and Catholic social teaching for the parish and larger community; and (3) advocacy for our values in the public arena. Advocacy often involves participation in legislative networks or community organizations, which are described below.

Legislative Networks

In *Putting Children and Families First,* the bishops call us to "shape policies that help families protect their children's lives and overcome the moral, social, and economic forces that threaten their future." This means accepting our responsibility as citizens to be active in the political process. It can also mean creating vehicles through which the Catholic community can bring our values to bear on the public policies and programs that affect families and children.

Many dioceses and State Catholic Conferences have found that a very effective vehicle for influencing public policies is a legislative network through which individual Catholics can learn about important public policy issues and can raise their voices to impact decisions affecting the poor and vulnerable. In these networks, members receive written or telephone alerts asking them to contact their state or national legislators about specific legislative issues. As these networks grow and become more numerous, the Church can become increasingly effective in shaping a society that truly "puts children and families first."

To find out if there is a legislative network in your area, contact your diocesan social action director, diocesan pro-life director, or your State Catholic Conference director. A resource on setting up legislative networks is available through the USCC Department of Social Development and World Peace (202/541-3180). If your state or diocese has no legislative network, you may want to participate in such national networks as the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment (202/393-0703), NETWORK (202/526-4070), Bread for the World (202/269-0200), or other advocacy groups.

Community Organizing: One Parish's Story

In the south Phoenix neighborhood where St. Catherine Parish is located, gangs ruled the streets, and drive-by shootings were terrorizing children and families in the community. St. Catherine's parishioners decided they had to do something.

Working with a committed organizer from the CHD-funded Valley Interfaith Project, parishioners went through a six-month process of individual and group meetings to discuss the problems in their neighborhood and to build participation in community activities. The new parish leaders that emerged through this process then reached out to other community leaders. Together, they developed a six-point plan with the police and local schools to take back their neighborhood and to develop a crime-free, drug-free community. Drive-by shootings were reduced and the number of parents participating in school events went from 20 to 200.

Plans are now being made with the city of Phoenix to build a multi-cultural recreation center in the community. And St. Catherine is beginning to work with other churches in Phoenix on wider issues of equity and justice.

A principal means of responding to poor children and vulnerable families is parish efforts to serve those in need through contributions of time and money.

Community Organization

In many dioceses across the country, low-income people have come together in an organized way to identify and work on issues affecting their lives. Parishes can join or provide time, space, or financial support to these self-help groups. They offer excellent opportunities for parishes to make a difference in their immediate neighborhood or in the broader community in solidarity with empowered low-income people. Often, community organizations will provide leadership training for parish members while helping several congregations pool their energies to have a greater impact addressing local needs and influencing policies and programs. (See the description of one parish's experience on this page.) Your contributions to the Campaign for Human Development make this kind of effort possible. If you are interested in participating in such a group, contact your Campaign for Human Development diocesan director to learn if one has been organized in your diocese.

Outreach and Charity

"Through families, children should come to identify with the most needy in the community, especially poor and suffering children, and should develop a lifelong commitment to respond through service of the poor and disadvantaged and through action for justice and peace in their own communities and the world." (Putting Children and Families First)

A principal means of responding to poor children and vulnerable families is parish efforts to serve those in need through contributions of time and money.

Reaching Local Children and Families

Addressing the local dimension of social ministry begins with identifying key problems that face your community. Methods of accomplishing this can range from a formal parish needs assessment to informal talks with neighboring families and groups. Based on the needs identified in your area, you can choose from a wide range of service, advocacy, and organizing strategies.

Here are a few examples of how parishes and parishioners can respond to the needs of children and their families. Your local Catholic Charities agency and diocesan social action office are important resources for identifying social ministry opportunities in your local area.

Using Existing National Programs

One of the first steps in focusing on children and families is to examine what you are already doing. National programs that you are already asked to support can be turned into opportunities to highlight children and families in our communities, nation, and world.

Campaign for Human Development: CHD represents an excellent opportunity to participate in the Church's efforts to empower low-income families to address the concerns and needs in their own communities. Every year in November, parishes across the country are asked to take up the CHD collection. This money is used to fund self-help groups in low-income communities. You can use the time of this collection to educate members of your parish about issues, giving them an opportunity to participate through their donations. Educational strategies include having speakers from local CHD-funded groups, using CHD videos at parish functions or meetings, and arranging a "field trip" for parish members to a CHD-funded group. For additional ideas and information on local funded groups, contact your diocesan CHD director or the national CHD office (202/541-3210).

Immunizing Young Children

They're back. Childhood diseases that are preventable through vaccines are back. In 1990, the number of reported measles cases was 18 times the number in 1983. Whooping cough, German measles, and mumps outbreaks are also occurring at much higher rates than before.

Vaccines can't work if children don't get them. Lack of immunizations is most severe among young, urban, poor, and minority children. In some cities, the number of two-year-olds who are up-to-date with immunizations is less than 25 percent.

How did this happen? Over the last decade, immunizing children stopped being a priority – with governments, with health care providers, with parents. Because of liability issues, the cost of vaccines has gone up dramatically. Low income parents trying to get their children immunized encounter stumbling blocks – long waits for appointments to clinics, clinic hours and locations that are inconvenient for working parents, and clinic charges that are too high.

The Catholic Health Association of the United States is working to overcome this problem. In their maternity programs, they are making sure expectant and new mothers know about the importance of immunizations and how to get them. They are checking the immunization status of children coming into their emergency rooms. They are setting up immunization express lanes in their clinics and making sure that all children showing up get all the vaccines they need. They are setting up or sending staff to work in community based weekend clinics.

Here are some possible parish activities:

Awareness

- Distribute available brochures about the importance of immunization;
- Publicize special outreach programs and clinics through bulletins and other means of communication; and
- Hold a child health fair with information about health promotion and disease prevention of children – including immunization.

School Programs

- Make sure your school enforces policies on immunizing children before entering school, and second-dose measles vaccines;
- Report all outbreaks of communicable diseases to your local health department; and
- Include the topic of immunizations in personal health courses.

Help Vaccinate Children

- Recruit nurses, physicians, and other volunteers from the parish to serve in community immunization programs;
- Be a site for weekend or other immunization clinics. In some areas, immunization vans pull up to church parking lots on a regular schedule; and
- If government policies are the problem (such as lack of funding or public clinic schedules) make phone calls and write letters to change those policies.

These suggestions were prepared by the Catholic Health Association of the United States. To find out if immunization protection is a problem in your community, and how your parish can help, contact your local Catholic hospital or children's hospital, health department, or pediatric society, or call the Catholic Health Association (202/296-3993).

Respect Life Program: The Catholic bishops have designated the first week of October as Respect Life Week – a time for prayer and study on respect for human life. Today, the Respect Life Program, which begins on the first Sunday of October, is a year-round program that seeks to: (1) proclaim the sanctity and value of human life; (2) oppose and ultimately eliminate threats to human life; (3) correct those situations that diminish life itself or limit its appropriate enjoyment; (4) support and encourage those things which sustain, nourish, or provide for the proper enjoyment of life; and (5) advocate for vulnerable families and individuals. To assist parishes and others to implement the program, the NCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities develops an annual program manual (with thematic essays, program suggestions, resources, liturgical and homily suggestions, bulletin inserts and daily prayers, and full-color posters and motivation fliers suitable for distribution in parishes). For additional information, contact your diocesan pro-life director or the NCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life (202/541-3070).

(Lennart Nilsson photo)

National Migration Week: The Catholic Church in the United States designates Epiphany week as National Migration Week. This program provides an opportunity for parishes and dioceses nationwide to welcome the newcomers in our midst and educate parishioners about the needs and contributions of newcomers in our community. USCC Migration and Refugee Services has prepared a parish manual which provides ideas for liturgical celebrations; parish, school and community activities; and social involvement. On page 49 you will find ideas for activities which can be done during National Migration Week and all year long in your parish and community to welcome newcomers. For additional information, contact the National Migration Week coordinator in your diocese or the National Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees Office (202/541-3223).

Parish Outreach Programs

Below is a sampling of the many specific service programs for children and families that are being carried out by parishes across the country. Your diocesan social action office and Catholic Charities agency can be helpful links and partners in these efforts.

Shelter and Food: Many parishes participate in efforts to provide food for hungry families and shelter to homeless families.

Child Care: Many parishes have begun after-school programs or latchkey programs for children who might otherwise end up home alone because of the economic demand upon the family. Parishes can organize fund-raising activities to benefit a child care program, or set up a scholarship fund for parents who cannot afford child care.

Teens: Parishes have developed community service programs and projects run by disadvantaged teens to encourage their sense of being needed and having something to give. Scholarship funds can help young people go to college or training institutions.

Marriage and Family Counseling: Parishes can provide accessible family counseling that reflects our values and needs.

Speakers: Parishes can gain new insights on the issue of children and families by hosting guest speakers.

Support for Pregnant Women: There are many things parishes can provide, including counseling, respite care for young mothers, sheltering programs; they can "adopt" a local emergency pregnancy center in need of volunteers, funds, and materials. Such efforts provide real assistance to mothers who might otherwise consider abortion.

Job Support Centers: Some parishes have set up employment counseling and other types of job information for the unemployed in their community.

Schools: Working jointly with other parishes, businesses, and service organizations, parishes can meet with school administrators to put together an "adopt-a-school" program.

Self-Help Groups: Parishes host AA meetings, Al-Anon, SIDS, and other groups.

Persons with Disabilities: Not only have parishes sought to become barrier free, many offer supportive services from transportation and Special Olympics to respite care for parents and children.

Specific suggestions for what parishes can do to promote immunization for young children, to help immigrant children and families, and to help abused and neglected children can be found in the examples on pages 47, 49, and 54 respectively.

Reaching Out to Children and Families Around the World

One of the most direct ways for parishes to get involved with global problems is through programs that connect the parish community directly to the needs of children around the world.

International Charity

The Church annually undertakes several collections to support international relief efforts. These offer excellent opportunities to educate parishioners about the needs of children and families throughout the world.

American Bishops Overseas Appeal: Four Catholic service agencies are supported by the overseas appeal — Catholic Relief Services, NCCB Migration and Refugee Services, the Holy Father's Relief Program, and the USCC Department of Social Development and World Peace — working in 73 countries to provide both immediate and long-term relief from poverty and suffering (202/541-3315).

Collection for the Church in Latin America: Through this annual appeal, U.S. Catholics show their solidarity in faith with their Latin American counterparts, over 50 percent of whom live in extreme poverty (202/541-3050).

NCCB Aid for the Church in Eastern Europe: Through an Ash Wednesday or Lenten Sunday

Helping Immigrants and Refugees

In 1990, 656,000 immigrants arrived in this country. Many need the help parishes can provide. In 1992, the USCC Department of Migration and Refugees Services (MRS) will resettle in the United States over 30,000 refugees from multi-ethnic and multi-religious backgrounds. Many are in need of sponsors. Refugee children who arrive as unaccompanied minors are often older children who need foster care.

There are a variety of opportunities for parishes and individuals to assist newcomers to our communities:

- sponsoring Haitian unaccompanied minors through USCC Migration and Refugee Services' resettlement services to over 90 percent of the unaccompanied Haitian children admitted to the U.S. (contact your local diocesan resettlement office or USCC/MRS, 800/428-3717);
- helping other unaccompanied refugee children placed with the help of diocesan affiliates in foster care homes or supervised small group care (contact your local diocesan resettlement office, Catholic Charities office, or chancery);
- sponsoring a refugee family by acting as a friend; helping the family find housing, jobs, health care, schools; teaching them how to open a bank account or use local transportation, etc.;
- volunteering at the local refugee resettlement office;
- establishing a welcoming committee to visit newcomers;
- becoming a Big Brother/Sister to a child and inviting the child to participate in local recreational events;
- organizing informational sessions or social gatherings to introduce newcomers and their traditions to the congregation;
- incorporating the plight of refugees into your parish educational or Catholic social teaching programs, using curricula such as *Flight to Hope* (contact Ha Nguy, 202/541-3234 for more information);
- tutoring immigrants and refugees in English and other subjects, and offering babysitting for parents during classes;
- encouraging the establishment of low-cost/sliding-scale counseling services at the diocesan or parish level;
- organizing a volunteer car pool to transport newcomers to church, appointments, interviews, etc.;
- bringing newcomers a gift box containing such things as coupons for local services, a coupon for free babysitting (a good project for parish teens), a directory of local services including restaurants, ethnic markets, dentists, and doctors, as well as the names and numbers of people in the parish who wouldn't mind being called for advice and assistance; and
- preparing and conducting a "multicultural liturgy."

These suggestions were prepared by the USCC Department of Migration and Refugee Services. For more information on how you can help newcomers in your community, contact your diocesan resettlement office or the national Migration and Refugee Services (USCC) office (202/541-3220).

collection, the U.S. bishops have initiated a three-year aid program for the Church and its people in Eastern Europe (202/541-3400).

Holy Childhood Association: During HCA's seasonal appeals at Halloween, Advent, and Lent, children receive an offering box encouraging sacrificial giving to assist less fortunate children in more than 100 countries. A portion of the proceeds from each Special Appeal goes to children in the country featured on the poster for that appeal. The seasonal appeals can work alone or in conjunction with HCA's intercultural education program (202/775-8637).

(Catholic Relief Services photo)

Special Programs

Operation Rice Bowl (ORB): Sponsored by Catholic Relief Services in cooperation with individual dioceses, ORB helps parishes and individuals participate in a Lenten program of prayer, education, fasting, and almsgiving. Its aim is to involve American Catholics with the issues, needs, and daily struggles of families in the Third World. Available in both Spanish and English, ORB materials (including a 15-minute video) provide examples of how ORB support can make a difference, and suggestions for special Lenten observances. For information contact Church Affairs, Catholic Relief Services (410/625-2220).

Help-a-Child: Co-sponsored by the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Help-a-Child offers the opportunity to reach out to poor children in India, Thailand, Brazil, and throughout Africa with a one-time contribution or through monthly sponsorship support. The Help-a-Child program assists the development projects of CRS and an indigenous Catholic organization. These projects provide nutritious food, basic health care, clean water, and schooling. Help-a-Child sponsors learn about the cultures and circumstances of the children they are aiding through the letters to sponsors or through the *Help-a-Child* newsletter. Brochures and a 28-minute video ($19.95) can be obtained from NCCW (202/682-0334).

Water for Life: Five million children die each year and many more are left impaired and debilitated from diarrhea and other water-borne illnesses. Families and parishes who contribute to this cooperative program of the NCCW and CRS help fund water installation projects in developing countries, thereby reducing water-borne diseases. Brochures can be obtained from the NCCW for the cost of shipping and handling (202/682-0334).

Speakers Program: Sponsor a talk on the situation in Northern Ireland, South Africa, Croatia, El Salvador, or another area of interest. Church representatives from around the world regularly visit this country and many American missionaries would welcome the opportunity to share their experiences and knowledge and suggest how a parish might help. To be notified when international church representatives are in your area, contact your diocesan social action, justice and peace, or CRS director.

Child Sponsorship: The Catholic Near East Welfare Association, a papal agency for humanitarian and pastoral support, offers opportunities for individuals and families to sponsor children in Ethiopia, India, Jordan, Lebanon, and other parts of the Middle East. Sponsors receive a photo and information about their child and may correspond as often as they wish. All funds go directly to care for the sponsored child. Contact Catholic Near East Welfare Association (212/826-1480).

> ***As citizens we have an opportunity to share our convictions on how our community and nation can best meet the needs of children and families.***

Adopt-a-Parish: Many parishes in this country have been enriched by developing a sister parish relationship with parishes in needy areas of the globe. This relationship allows a parish both to assist a needy community in tangible ways and to develop a sense of solidarity with Christians around the world. For more information, contact the USCC

Office of International Justice and Peace (202/541-3197).

Direct Assistance: A parish can respond to emergencies such as drought in Africa or war in Bosnia by organizing the collection of medicine, clothing, or money.

Public Policy

"As believers and citizens, we need — each of us — to use our values, voices and votes to hold our public officials accountable and to shape a society that puts our children first." (Putting Children and Families First)

A major arena for sharing Catholic values and experience is public policy. As citizens we have an opportunity to share our convictions on how our community and nation can best meet the needs of children and families.

Parishioners can use their voices and votes to make a difference on local, state, federal, and global issues.

The Bishops' Message

In their statement, *Putting Children and Families First*, the bishops tell us: "No government can substitute for a family's care, but clearly families can be helped or hurt in their irreplaceable roles. Government can either support or undermine families as they cope with the moral, social, and economic stresses of caring for children."

The bishops also challenge the often counterproductive ideological debate about children and families:

> There has been an unfortunate, unnecessary, and unreal polarization in discussions of the best way to help families. Some emphasize the primary role of moral values and personal responsibility, the sacrifices to be made, and the personal behaviors to be avoided, but they often ignore or de-emphasize the broader forces which hurt families, e.g., the impact of economics, discrimination, and anti-family policies. Others emphasize the social and economic forces that undermine families and the responsibility of government to meet human needs, but they often neglect the importance of basic values and personal responsibility. (*Putting Children and Families First*)

The bishops challenge us to focus on both personal responsibilities and public policies. They outline four broad and ambitious goals for the year 2000:

- eliminating child poverty in the United States;
- shaping a world where children no longer die of hunger or its consequences;
- finding life-giving and loving alternatives to the despair of abortion; and
- supporting families in their struggle to offer their children the values, help, and hope they need, offering help in breaking the cycle of poverty and destructive behavior which leaves so many children imprisoned.

The bishops also offer seven criteria for public policy. These criteria can be found on pages 15 and 16 of this manual.

The Role of Parishes

Parishioners can use their voices and votes to make a difference on local, state, federal, and global issues. Your diocesan directors of social action, pro-life, and others are the best sources of assistance for working on public policy issues.

State Policies

"A decent society will not balance its budget on the backs of poor children. Sadly, the fiscal difficulties in many of our states has meant disproportionate cuts and unfair burdens for poor families." (Putting Children and Families First)

Many of the public policies that most directly affect families and children are made at the state level. The following issues are examples of policies that parishes and dioceses can monitor and influence through a legislative network or through independent letter and telephone campaigns. Among the various issues that might arise are:

Adoption: Monitor and support improvements to adoption and foster care programs;

Unborn Children: Seek changes to eliminate and restrict abortion and end state funding of abortion; support programs that provide caring and life-affirming services for pregnant women and their children;

Child Abuse: Support education and the treatment and prevention of child abuse;

Education: Work to improve the quality of education through increased parental and family involvement, by encouraging teacher excellence, by seeking adequate funding, and by supporting parental choice through vouchers and tax credits;

Divorce and Child Support: Promote a child-focused approach to divorce and strengthen child support systems;

Welfare Reform: Support reform of the welfare system to preserve families, protect children, and coordinate services; support public assistance levels which permit families to live in dignity;

Health Care: Insist that poor families and children receive access to quality health care, cooperating with Catholic health care facilities;

Housing: Build support for more affordable housing, perhaps by developing a low-income housing trust fund through the state legislature.

For information on issues of concern in your state, contact your diocese or your State Catholic Conference office.

National Policies

"We are faced with a pattern of national neglect that seriously shortchanges our children. We have neither a comprehensive family policy nor a consistent concern for children. And the youngest members of our society are paying a huge price for our neglect." (Putting Children and Families First)

(Catholic Relief Services photo)

The more a parish is involved in the local community, the more it becomes clear that some problems can only be addressed by national action. Many parishes, in cooperation with the local diocese or State Catholic Conference, are organizing legislative networks (see page 45) to influence national public policies effecting children and families. The following are just some of the issues on which parishes can take action:

Taxes: Promote changes in the tax code that would greatly help poor families and their children. One is a "children's allowance" in the form of a refundable children's tax credit. The second is an expanded earned income credit for working poor families;

Food and Hunger: Support full funding of the Women, Infant and Children Supplemental Food program (WIC);

Health Care: Work for comprehensive national health care reform consistent with USCC criteria including expansion of medicaid and prenatal care;

Housing: Promote the availability of affordable housing for families;

Pro-Life: Halt the destruction of unborn children, prohibit federal funding of abortion, and support alternatives to abortions;

Parental Choice: Support policies that give parents the right to choose the education best suited for their children whether public or private, including parochial schools;

Child Support: Support a national program that promotes parental responsibility and guarantees a minimum benefit for children growing up with an absent parent;

Immigrants and Refugees: Respond to the needs of immigrants and refugees locally and nationally (from time to time USCC/MRS provides diocesan offices with reports and memoranda about current refugee problems on which letter campaigns are recommended).

For more information on the national public policy priorities of the Church, contact your diocesan social action director, diocesan pro-life director, or the USCC Department of Social Development and World Peace (202/541-3180).

International Policies

"Foreign policy, military policy, and international economic policy are also children's policies...we need a new vision of solidarity in which poor children are seen not as remote issues or abstract problems, but as our sons and daughters, members of a global human family. We especially need to be their advocates here in the United States where global economic policy is so often made." (Putting Children and Families First)

On the international level, the needs are no less urgent and the problems are, if anything, more intractable – and more difficult for a parish community to address. But there are many things that a parish can do to address the needs of children around the world through advocacy for a constructive U.S. foreign policy. A parish might want to join a diocese or state legislative network (see page 45), organize letter-writing campaigns, or meet with their elected representatives regarding the following policies that directly or indirectly affect children:

- encourage a foreign aid program that gives greater priority to the basic needs of families and children in the developing countries than to the national security or competitive advantage of the United States or the military appetites of Third World governments;
- support U.S. signing and ratification of the international Convention on Children;
- support U.S. efforts to bring peace to the Middle East and the former Yugoslavia, conflicts which continue to harm children to a shocking degree;
- support efforts to ensure that U.S. aid does not support anti-child and anti-family coercive population and abortion policies;
- write to Chinese or Vietnamese officials opposing repressive religious policies that include prohibitions on religious education for children;
- support efforts to relieve world hunger, including the Freedom From Want Act and needed changes in U.S. Food Aid;
- advocate for U.S. action and investment to assist nations recovering from war and repression in Central America, Eastern Europe, and Africa;
- support Circle of Poison legislation which bans export of toxic chemicals outlawed in the United States;
- support selective reduction of debt of poor countries owed to the U.S. in order to help their development; and
- encourage international organizations and governments to support programs that provide physical and legal protection for children in detention overseas and to facilitate international adoptions through Catholic Charities. For more information contact USCC/MRS (800/428-3717).

> ***In local, state, and federal races, we need to focus the candidates' and the communities' attention on the needs and priorities of children and families....***

For more information on international policy issues affecting children and families, contact your diocesan social action office or the USCC Department of Social Development and World Peace (202/541-3180).

Political Responsibility

"1992 is an election year. While others are campaigning for public office, let us campaign for children. Let us insist that the needs of our children, all children but especially unborn children and poor children, take first place in the dialogue over the values and vision that ought to guide our nation." (Putting Children and Families First)

In election years, we have a unique opportunity to lift our voices on behalf of children and families. In local, state, and federal races, we need to focus the candidates' and the communities' attention on the needs and priorities of children and families, especially the poor and vulnerable. Among the activities a parish can undertake are:

- voter registration efforts;
- sponsoring (alone or with other parishes or groups) forums for issue discussion and candidate questioning; and
- preaching and other reflection on the moral dimensions of public issues.

For specific opportunities, strategies, and limitations, you may wish to obtain a copy of *Resources for Political Responsibility*, USCC Department of Social Development and World Peace (202/541-3191).

Addressing Abuse and Neglect

"Physical and sexual abuse of children constitutes a terrible betrayal of trust, a threat to their emotional and physical health, and a challenge for every institution that serves children." (Putting Children and Families First)

Abuse and neglect are tragic problems that touch every parish. The following ideas were developed by the staff of Boys Town to highlight the needs of abused and neglected children and to outline what parishes can do.

There are many things that parents and parishes can do to support and nurture children. But some children need special attention because they are the victims of abuse and neglect. While clearly parish leaders cannot interfere with the legitimate role of parents in providing guidance and discipline, they can provide critical help to families by learning to recognize the signs of abuse and by learning how to respond.

Abuse and neglect can take many forms – physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and spiritual abuse. It is important to keep in mind that abuse and neglect are not limited to one economic or social grouping in our society. Alcohol and drug abuse, often related to child neglect and abuse, can strike anywhere. Experts suggest that abuse and neglect are likely to occur in almost every parish.

(CNS Photo)

What Can Parishes Do?

A number of organizations can help you identify what your parish can do for abused and neglected children. Your local department of social services and your diocesan Catholic social service agency can often provide information, training, and consulting. Boys Town has offered the following suggestions for potential parish activities. For assistance in carrying out the activities below, contact local social service agencies or Boys Town (402/498-1556).

1. The parish can open up existing channels of communication or create new ones so that at-risk children can more easily ask for help, express their fears of continued abuse, and reveal the secret of their lives.

- School teachers, school counselors, priests, coaches, and CCD personnel can be aware of the "signs." They can encourage children to talk about bothersome personal problems when they think this is important.
- Literature and handouts can be made available at the school and at the parish.
- Schools and CCD programs can explain that teachers, counselors, and others are happy to spend time listening to children about their problems.
- Parishes and schools can develop peer groups where children can trust each other enough to share "their secret" with others who will help them get help.
- Local and national resources can be advertised in the bulletin, the school newspaper, through posters, etc. There are national hotlines (e.g., the Boys Town National Hotline 1-800-448-3000; Spanish-speaking counselors are available) where kids can call in total confidence.

2. The parish can provide wise counsel and referral for at-risk children and families.

(A) Wise counsel means good judgment about how adults in the parish respond to children when children confide their problems and fears.

- This means training key parish leaders so that they can respond in a way that is supportive of the child and leads to proper handling of the matter that is confided to them. Adults should not rely on their own upbringing in responding to such situations, but should receive proper training through local and diocesan social service agencies.
- Parish members who are professionals trained in these matters can serve as a corps of on-call volunteers.

(B) Referral can be made to an array of helpful services for at-risk children and families that are available in almost every city and even small towns. The diocesan office of Catholic social services, Catholic Charities, the local government social service agency, and national hotlines can provide consulting and information on resources.

3. Mobilize Existing Parish Resources

(A) Provide basic parent training on a regular basis within the parish or the deanery as a learning resource, both for parish leaders and for families.

(B) Educate key parish organizations about at-risk youth and families in an organized way. This includes symptomology and services available. Local diocesan service agencies can assist with education.

(C) The single most important thing a parish can offer at-risk families and youth is a fail-safe, anti-gossip system. In some parishes the three fastest means of communication are: telephone, telegraph, and tell the parish council/altar society/human needs committee. Children and families must trust that their problems will be kept confidential.

Family Support Resources

A CATHOLIC CHILDREN AND FAMILIES First CAMPAIGN

"Within our families, we need to teach — by word and example, by our priorities and our lives — the values that help our children grow to be responsible, faithful, caring and disciplined. Our love, our values and our faith are passed on not only by what we say, but also by how we live."

(Putting Children and Families First)

One of the most important things parishes do for families is to offer the basic support and guidance that promote family stability and build loving relationships. Through marriage preparation and enrichment programs, baptism and confirmation preparation, religious education, and parenting education, parishes provide vital support to families and children.

The following collection of resources covers a variety of topics that can help parishes help families. These suggestions and tools include:

- general resources and ideas for family life ministry;
- questions for conducting a "family impact analysis" in your parish;
- parenting education resources;
- ideas for assessing and controlling the impact of media on families;
- handouts or bulletin inserts for family prayer and reflection during Advent; and
- resources for African American families.

(Ann Zimmerman photo)

Family Life

"We need to lift up the vocation of marriage and family life and offer to people the resources of our spiritual and sacramental heritage in effective and creative ways." (*Putting Children and Families First*)

The following suggestions were prepared by the NCCB Secretariat for Family, Laity, Women and Youth. They provide a wide range of ideas for parish programs that support families. Your diocesan family life director is an important source of additional ideas and assistance.

1. Your parish can *listen* to families, learn who the families of the parish are, and learn what are their concerns, needs, and strengths. You might do this by means of a systematic listening and study process like the one provided in *The Ministry of Listening: Ministering with a Family Perspective* by Rev. J. Daryl Furlong (Chicago: ACTA Publications, 1987). You could also organize small focus groups consisting of parents or family members in similar situations, e.g., newly-married couples and parents of young adolescents. This "focus and invite" strategy is described in *Caring That Enables: A Manual for Developing Parish Family Ministry,* by Leif Kehrwald (New York: Paulist Press, 1991).

2. Your parish can *encourage* families to spend time together, to reach out to other families and to the larger community with acts of charity and justice, to pray together, and to celebrate rituals at special times and seasons of the year. Included in this manual are two resources prepared by Catholic Charities USA and the Campaign for Human Development that can help families pray, reflect, and act together during the season of Advent. For additional ideas and resources, see *Family Gathering: Stories, Prayers, and Activities for Catholic Families*, (published five times during the school year by HI-TIME Publishing, Box 13337, Milwaukee, WI 53213), and *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Catholic Conference Publishing Services, 1988).

3. Your parish can *respond* in a spirit of service and partnership with programs and ministries geared to the variety of family needs and situations you discover. You can focus your efforts on the common life cycle stages of families in your parish. For example:

— newly-married couples
— new parents
— families with preschool children
— families with school children
— families with adolescents
— families with young adults
— families in later years

Equally important are programs and ministries responding to different family structures and situations. For example:

- one-parent families
- two-wage-earner families
- divorced or separated families
- adoptive families
- remarried/step families
- childless families
- families with a member having special needs
- families with elderly dependents

Two resources containing many ideas for strategies and programs are: *Parish Family Ministry: Reflections, Ideas, Resources,* by Mark Mogilka and Nancy Barthel (Department of Personal and Family Enrichment, Diocese of Green Bay, WI) and *Creating a Partnership in Faith: A Parish Planning Guide,* by Thomas Bright and John Roberto (New Rochelle: Don Bosco Multimedia, 1992).

4. Your parish can *organize* groups for ongoing like-to-like ministry, e.g., support for divorced or separated persons, for new mothers, for parents who have lost a child, for children whose parents have divorced, etc. For some ideas about peer ministry groups, see *Together As Parish,* by Dolores A. Mortimer (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1992). For resources on ministry with divorced persons, children, and other bereavement situations, contact: North American Conference of Separated and Divorced Catholics, 80 St. Mary's Drive, Cranston, RI 02920 (401/943-7903), and Rainbows for All God's Children, 1111 Tower Road, Schaumburg, IL 60173 (312/310-1880).

5. Your parish can *promote* the work of various marriage and family life movements in which parishioners can join, such as:

- Christian Family Movement
- Marriage Encounter
- Marriage Retorno
- Teams of Our Lady
- Focolare

For information about these, and for details about other groups providing weekend renewal programs, family retreats, etc., you can contact your diocesan family life ministry office.

6. Your parish can *examine* parish programs, policies, and ministries for the degree of their "family friendliness." For a list of suggested questions, see "Family Impact Analysis" below.

7. Your parish can *establish* the role of "family advocate" on your parish staff or parish council. For a description of this role, see *Families at the Center: A Handbook for Parish Ministry with a Family Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Catholic Conference Publishing Services, 1990).

(Ann Zimmerman photo)

Family Impact Analysis

> "Analyze every policy and program — diocesan, parish, domestic, and international — for its impact on children and families; look at every proposal from a family perspective."
> *(Putting Children and Families First)*

The following questions were developed to help parishes analyze their programs from a family perspective. They were prepared by the NCCB Secretariat for Family, Laity, Women and Youth.

One way to meet the challenge to put children and families first is to conduct a family impact assessment in your parish. The leadership of the parish could ask some basic questions: Are the programs, policies, and ministries of the parish "family friendly?" Do they place the needs, concerns, and situations of children and families first?

When you're planning or evaluating a certain area of parish life, you can use the lens provided by a family perspective. When you look through that lens, here are some family impact questions you may wish to ask:

(A) The family is a system of *relationships* — and so, do parish programs, policies, and ministries:

1) help families to recognize their strengths and further develop them?
2) acknowledge the extent of family influence on individuals and help them to deal with its positive and negative consequences?
3) respond to the needs of individuals and families at various stages of the life cycle?
4) address the special needs of families in transition or crisis?

(B) Families are *diverse* in their structure, heritage, and needs — and so, do parish programs, policies, and ministries:

1) allow families of ethnic, racial, or cultural minorities to express their differences and richness?
2) unfairly favor a certain kind of family structure and penalize others, e.g., one-earner vs. two; couple vs. single-parent?
3) offer help to specific groups who need it but are not receiving it, e.g., the unemployed, families with disabled members?

(C) Christian families have a special character and *mission* within society and church – and so, do parish programs, policies, and ministries:

1) develop within families a greater appreciation for the holiness of their relationships and activities?
2) promote family prayer, ritual, and celebration?
3) assist parents in handing down values and traditions to their children?
4) encourage families to reach out in support of other families? in community and citizen roles?

> ***Parenting is one of the most important and rewarding challenges people face. Yet most of us receive very little formal training on how to do it well.***

(D) Families and parishes are challenged to work in *partnership* – and so, do parish programs, policies, and ministries:

1) encourage family involvement in planning, implementation, and evaluation?
2) help families to perform their responsibilities and prevent parish activities from substituting for these functions?
3) take into account the impact of parish scheduling, budgeting, and use of volunteers on the lives of families?

(E) Families and parishes are called to *reach out to those in need and work for justice*, and so, do parish programs, policies and ministries:

1) offer families opportunities to serve others, especially the poor and vulnerable?
2) help families become advocates for justice, community, and human dignity?
3) help families organize to build a better community, to overcome forces which undermine families?

For a fuller explanation of how to use family impact questions in a planning/evaluation process, contact your diocesan family life director. You may also want to use *Families at the Center: A Handbook for Parish Ministry with a Family Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Catholic Conference Publishing Services, 1990), Pub. No. 337-X.

Parenting Education

> "Many parents...struggle to meet the emotional, spiritual, and physical needs of their children in the face of powerful moral, economic, and social pressures that make their task more difficult." *(Putting Children and Families First)*

The following list of resources for parish parenting education programs was compiled by the NCCB Secretariat for Family, Laity, Women and Youth and the USCC Department of Education.

Parenting is one of the most important and rewarding challenges people face. Yet most of us receive very little formal training on how to do it well. The following resources can help your parish offer training in basic parenting skills and spirituality. Your diocesan family life office and education office can also provide ideas and resources for parenting education programs.

Programs and Materials for Parenting Education

Establishing Parish Parenting Centers. A step-by-step guide providing information on how to set up a center, identify resources, and establish goals and objectives. By Lorraine P. Amendolara, Our Sunday Visitor Press, Huntington, IN, 1990.

The Spirituality of Parenting. Six sessions on discerning God in everyday life using discussion booklets and small group process. By Maureen Gallagher, Leaven Press, Kansas City, MO, 1985.

Parenting for Peace and Justice. A variety of written materials for individual, family, and group use available from PPJ Network, 4144 Lindell Blvd., #122, St. Louis, MO 63108.

Families and Young Adolescents. Six two-hour sessions on family health, faith, sexuality, and more, designed to be used in a variety of formats. Edited by Janet Drey, Don Bosco Multimedia, New Rochelle, NY, 1992.

Rituals for Sharing Faith: A Resource for Parish Ministers. A collection of essays and workshop formats to help families celebrate God's presence in milestone and ordinary events of life. Edited by John Roberto, Don Bosco Multimedia, New Rochelle, NY, 1992.

Active Parenting. Six two-hour sessions using video, a handbook, and discussion guides. Trained facilitator necessary. By Michael Popkin, Ph.D., EcuFilm, Atlanta, GA, 1983.

(John Capobianco photo)

Good Beginnings. A four-session program for parents of children from birth to age three. Includes prayers and planning ideas for a Mass for expectant parents. By Lorraine P. Amendolara, Our Sunday Visitor Press, Huntington, IN, 1990.

Some Reading for Parents

The Spiritual Life of Children. A pediatric psychiatrist interviews children of many faiths with probing questions that reveal the depth of their spiritual lives and the formative role of adults. By Robert Coles, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, MA, 1990.

The Faith of Parents. A religious educator enables parents to reflect on their own religious identity, the roles that define their relationships with their children, and suggests resources to aid parents as children begin formal religious education. By Maria Harris, Paulist Press, New York, NY, 1991.

Revista Familia y Sociedad. Publicada por agentes de la Pastoral Familiar de América Latina. Entre sus publicaciones, se encuentran: Violencia Familiar y Social, El Valor de Ser Persona, Su Majestad el Niño, Familias Sanas. Para mayor información, escriba a Avenida 28, No. 37-21, Apartado Aéro 54569, Bogotá, Colombia.

Recursos para Católicos Hispanos. Publicado por Liguori Publications. Entre su material, encontramos: Manual para la Familia Católica de Hoy, Manual para la Católico de Hoy, etc. Liguori Publications, One Liguori Drive, Liguori, MO 63057-9999.

Children, Families, and the Media

> "Our news and entertainment media, despite some laudable efforts, too often attack family values, undermine moral principles, expose children to violence and to sexual themes on a daily basis. Fundamental values of integrity, compassion, respect for others, and honesty must be encouraged and reinforced by the culture at large." (*Putting Children and Families First*)

The following ideas were developed by the USCC Department of Communications to help parishes and families address the influence of the media on their children and families.

The media — the television, radio, print, and film industries — can and do exercise great influence on our children. What can families and parishes do to ensure that this influence is positive? Three important things:

- develop a habit of evaluating and selecting programming;
- advocate for improved standards in the media;
- identify and support positive, quality programming.

Evaluating and Selecting Media

Watching television shows and films should not be a passive activity. While we think of ourselves as "escaping," we are taking in countless unspoken messages with what we see. Advertisers lead the way in this field by associating their products with the strong feelings their commercials are meant to evoke. Movies also help communicate certain attitudes to ensure a receptivity to their story-telling. Parishes may want to share the following suggestions with their members:

- Discuss the television programming you watch with your family. Why are those people having so much fun driving a car? Does the program portray a positive image of women? How does the sitcom family resolve its conflict?
- Review the programs available before turning on the television. Make a deliberate selection. Ask your children why they watch what they do. Get them to think regularly about this "why."
- Read or listen to movie and television reviews.

Develop a "media literacy" that analyzes why shows and films have the effect they do and what messages are being communicated.

Advocating Improved Standards

In September 1990, the Motion Picture Association of America announced it was dropping the X rating and replacing it with the designation NC-17, caving in to the commercial interests of those who want to get sexually exploitative material into general theatrical release. This attempt to bypass community standards can be resisted. How?

- Launch a community awareness week built around the concept that NC-17 = X. Display posters in schools, libraries, theaters, video stores, and other public places.
- Seek out information about content and age suitability of movies that are playing in the community.
- Seek the cooperation of local high schools in communicating young people's responsibility to observe the age restrictions. Encourage schools to develop media literacy and values programs.
- Formulate a local movie committee. Call a meeting of concerned parents, church leaders, heads of local theaters and video stores, public and private school administrators, PTAs, youth groups, and all interested parties to discuss the question of how well ratings are being enforced. Draw up a list of priorities. Select a committee to follow up on the problems raised.
- Monitor the enforcement of rating age restrictions at the box office and in video rentals.
- Sponsor public meetings in which representatives of the local theaters and video stores can explain their policies in booking movies and how they enforce the ratings. Invite representatives of newspapers to discuss their policies on reviewing and advertising movies.

Quality Programming

The following information can be shared with families to help them identify quality programs:

- Many Catholic newspapers provide USCC motion picture and television reviews, capsules, and classifications through the Catholic News Service. A 1-900-PREVIEW phone line makes these available to anyone.
- Movie and television reviews are also printed in the *TV & Movie Guide* weekly and *The Monthly Movie Guide* newsletters which are sent to school, parish, and home subscribers.
- More than 6,000 motion picture reviews have been compiled in *A Movie and Video Guide for Families* (USCC Publishing Services, 1991).
- Through their Catholic Communication Campaign, the U.S. bishops have funded a wide range of programming for broadcast and video viewing which tells the story of the Catholic contribution to the United States through immigration (*A Time to Build* and *On Fire with Faith*), through social teaching (*Marketplace Prophets*), through cultural pluralism (*Circle of the Spirit*), and through the inspirational contributions of individuals (*Sr. Thea, Her Own Story*). These have been broadcast on network television and are available for school, parish, and home use by calling (800/235-8722).

For more information on these and many other resources call (202/ 541-3237).

> ***One of the most important things parishes do for families is to offer the basic support and guidance that promote family stability and build loving relationships.***

African American Family Resources

"Racial and ethnic discrimination hurts many families, limiting the incomes and futures of African American, Hispanic and Native American families...Equal opportunity in education, affirmative action in employment and non-discrimination in housing are essential steps to assure a productive and just future for children in minority families." *(Putting Children and Families First)*

The following suggestions were developed by the NCCB Secretariat for African American Catholics to help parishes celebrate African American culture and become sensitive to the priority needs identified by the African American Catholic community.

African American culture, traditions, and priorities can make a rich and vital contribution to parish life. Here are some suggestions for parishes that include information on African American cultural celebrations as well as areas of concern included in the *National Black Catholic Pastoral Plan* of 1987. The National Black Catholic Congress in July of 1992 focused on the African American family and developed an agenda for action. It can be obtained by contacting the NCCB Secretariat for African American Catholics (202/541-3177).

African American Culture and Traditions

Parishes can recognize family/community rituals like:

- *Kwanzaa* – An African American holiday celebrated from December 26 through January 1, *Kwanzaa* is based on the agricultural holidays of Africa called "the first fruits." The holiday focuses on seven basic values of African culture: (1) *Umoja,* or unity; (2) *Kujichagulia,* or self-determination; (3) *Ujima,* or collective work and responsibility; (4) *Ujamaa,* or cooperative economics; (5) *Nia,* or purpose; (6) *Kuumba,* or creativity; and (7) *Imani,* or faith. *Kwanzaa* is a *cultural* holiday, not a religious one, and can be practiced by African Americans of all faiths. Information and materials on *Kwanzaa* can be obtained thorough the University of Sankore Press (213/299-6124);

(Michael Hoyt/Catholic Standard photo)

- Juneteenth Day – On June 19, the African American community celebrates freedom and marks the day the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. Parishes can participate in this holiday in a variety of ways, including incorporating the theme of freedom into the liturgy, organizing education sessions, or sponsoring special celebrations, dinners, etc.; and
- Jubilees – Honoring ancestors and the family is the focus of African American Jubilees or family reunions. Parishes can encourage individual families to hold reunions and can sponsor dinners, picnics, etc., to honor and celebrate all families in the parish.

Parishes can support the African American tradition of honoring ancestors and celebrating the family by:

- encouraging moments of prayer and reflection on the importance of ancestors during liturgies, birthdays, weddings, showers, Mother's Day and Father's Day celebrations, etc.; and
- encouraging modern American role models to serve as mentors for children and youth.

Priority Needs in the African American Catholic Community

Parishes can respond to the concerns identified in the *National Black Catholic Pastoral Plan* by:

1. Education: Redirecting existing parish funds to provide assistance to children and youth including:
    - setting up "After School Libraries;" and
    - opening parish facilities to serve as homework mentoring sites as well as cultural and educational centers for latchkey children and youth.
2. Food and Hunger: Organizing to ensure that children receive adequate food through:
    - sponsoring food pantries and soup kitchens that provide breakfast foods as well as lunch and dinner; and
    - advocating through St. Vincent de Paul, Sodality chapters, legislative networks, and other outreach organizations that the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) remains available.
3. Health Care: Encouraging quality health care by:
    - making parish buildings accessible as immunization, drug and alcohol counseling sites;
    - organizing marriage enrichment sessions whereby elders and professionals could provide parenting sessions to create bonds of support, build self-confidence, and celebrate the African American family.
4. Housing: Networking with Catholic Charities and local housing agencies to refer known homeless families and encourage affordable housing for families.

For more information on African American holidays and celebrations, as well as information on the *National Black Catholic Pastoral Plan,* contact your diocesan office for African American Catholics or the NCCB Secretariat for African American Catholics (202/541-3177).

Note: On the following pages are handouts or bulletin inserts that can be copied and given to families for use during Advent.

Putting Children and Families First

An Advent Resource from Catholic Charities USA

First Week of Advent

Take some time every day during Advent to pray together as a family and reflect on the bishops' statement, *Putting Children and Families First.* Place this resource in a prominent place in your household, such as the Advent wreath or dining table.

> *Through families, children should come to identify with the most needy in the community, especially poor and suffering children, and should develop a life-long commitment to respond through service to the poor and disadvantaged and through action for justice and peace in their own communities and the world.* – Putting Children and Families First

Family Reflection

It was suppertime on a rainy day nearly a month after Christmas. My son Matthew, almost 3, asked, "Where are the candles?" He was referring to the Advent wreath that had graced our table and had been put away. We were in the midst of potty training and were having a difficult day. "Aren't we asking Jesus to come anymore?" was his next question. "Yes," I said, realizing we needed a moment to pray for Jesus to be with us. How happy I was with his question, for he had learned something about Advent, much more than I had hoped.

Advent is a time of hope, expectation, and waiting. It is a time when the prophets speak of the One who comes with justice and peace. As parents, we see expectation in the faces of our children. We long to teach them about Jesus' birth as they wait for Santa Claus. We teach by example. We light candles on our wreath, increasing the light against the darkness each week. We hang symbols of those who have waited before us. And we can be living examples of helping people who are in need, lonely, and without hope through works of charity and justice that we share during this Advent.

– *Laura Stanko Britto*

Make copies, cut in half and insert in your bulletin

Putting Children and Families First

An Advent Resource from
Catholic Charities USA

Second Week of Advent

Take some time every day during Advent to pray together as a family and reflect on the bishops' statement, *Putting Children and Families First.* Place this resource in a prominent place in your household, such as the Advent wreath or dining table.

> *We urge a reordering of priorities – personal, ecclesial, and societal – to focus more on the needs and potential of our children. This message is a call for conversion and action – a spiritual and social reawakening to the moral and human costs of neglecting our children and families.* – Putting Children and Families First

Family Reflection

"Reform your lives! The Kingdom of God is at hand!" cries John the Baptist in this Sunday's gospel. And what is this kingdom like? Is it the best place one can be? The prophet Isaiah gives us a glimpse of the kingdom in today's second reading, where we hear of unlikely pairs being at peace with each other (Isaiah 11:1-10). Can you imagine the baby playing in the cobra's den, the wolf as a guest of a lamb, and the calf and young lion browsing together? What wonderful thoughts, what expectant hope we are given in today's Scripture!

The Advent Scriptures paint pictures of hope and justice in our minds and hearts. One of the ways we can enter into Scripture is to be imaginative and put ourselves into the story. For example, if you were the lamb, who would be your guest? As the young lion, who would be the "calf" you would walk with? What challenges to peace need to be overcome for the reign of God to be known in our homes, our relationships, and our community?

During Advent we pray with hope, we live with hope. Hope is the gift from God that empowers us to take steps to bring about the kingdom of God in our world. It is expressed in the simple gift of bringing a meal to a sick or fail elderly person, offering encouragement to someone seeking employment, cutting back on what we have to give to people in need, and making peace with those around us. Through our giving, others receive hope, and we bring about the kingdom of God.

– Laura Stanko Britto

Second Week of Advent
Prayers of Waiting

Sunday, December 6. We pray for married couples, friends, and co-workers who are experiencing division in their relationships as they wait to know the peace of the Lord.

Monday, December 7. We pray for people who are employed and those who are underemployed, who wait for just wages and steady employment to support their families.

Tuesday, December 8. Today is the feast of the Immaculate Conception. We pray for all expectant parents who wait for their children to be born.

Wednesday, December 9. The ability to worship God freely is a gift that many people do not share. We pray for people who wait for religious freedom.

Thursday, December 10. We pray for the victims of abuse, young and old, who wait for healing.

Friday, December 11. We pray for hope and peace in our own lives. Make an effort to pray during moments of waiting: at stop lights, in line at the store, in waiting rooms.

Saturday, December 12. Today is the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a remembrance of hope for the Indians of Mexico and for all peoples. Tell the story of Guadalupe – when Mary appeared to Juan Diego as a poor and pregnant native woman – in your family. Let us remember all our brothers and sisters in the Americas as they celebrate this day of hope.

Prayers of Waiting, Laura Stanko Britto © 1992. Used with permission.

Catholic Charities USA

• Supporting Families • Building Community • Reducing Poverty

In addition to providing services such as counseling, food, housing, and help with addictions, Catholic Charities agencies work with and on behalf of people in need to address the root causes of poverty and other social problems. These efforts include parish social ministry, community program development, and advocacy through community organization, social policy development, and legislative action.

Catholic Charities USA is the organization that unites the human service agencies operated by Catholic dioceses in the United States. Nearly 5,000 parishes and over 70,000 parish volunteers nationwide work in partnership with Catholic Charities to carry out the Church's mission to charity and justice.

To learn more about what you and your parish can do to respond to the needs of families, contact your local Catholic Charities agency or Ms. Rene Kay, Program Director for Parish Social Ministry, Catholic Charities USA, 1731 King St., Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314. (703) 549-1390.

Make copies, cut in half and insert in your bulletin

First Week of Advent
Prayers of Waiting

Sunday, November 29. We pray for those families in our community waiting for the basic necessities of life, a home and food on their table.

Monday, November 30. We pray for people who are sick who wait to be returned to health and for those who cannot get the healing care they need.

Tuesday, December 1. We pray for the 2,750 or more teens who become pregnant today and who wait for proper prenatal care and adequate food.

Wednesday, December 2. Twelve years ago today, four American women missionaries were martyred in El Salvador. On the anniversary of their death, we pray for people who wait for freedom, who wait to be free from oppression.

Thursday, December 3. We pray for individuals and families suffering with drug and alcohol abuse who wait to enter treatment programs, that they may be strengthened during their wait.

Friday, December 4. We pray for people who wait for work today.

Saturday, December 5. Tomorrow is the feast of St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children. In many places of the world, parents celebrate this day by leaving a treat in their children's shoes. We pray for children who wait today, especially those who are homeless and wait for shelter, food and shoes.

Prayers of Waiting, Laura Stanko Britto © 1992. Used with permission.

Catholic Charities USA

• Supporting Families • Building Community • Reducing Poverty

More than 2.6 million families and 8 million individuals across the United States turned to Catholic Charities for help in 1990. A disturbing trend is that 62 percent of Catholic Charities clients now need food, shelter, and emergency services in order to make it through one more day. A decade ago, only 23 percent needed such help.

Catholic Charities USA is the organization that unites the human service agencies operated by Catholic dioceses in the United States. Nearly 5,000 parishes and over 70,000 parish volunteers nationwide work in partnership with Catholic Charities to carry out the Church's mission to charity and justice.

To learn more about what you and your parish can do to respond to the needs of families, contact your local Catholic Charities agency or Ms. Rene Kay, Program Director for Parish Social Ministry, Catholic Charities USA, 1731 King St., Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314. (703) 549-1390.

Putting Children and Families First

An Advent Resource from Catholic Charities USA

Third Week of Advent

Take some time every day during Advent to pray together as a family and reflect on the bishops' statement, *Putting Children and Families First*. Place this resource in a prominent place in your household, such as the Advent wreath or dining table.

> *An African proverb suggests 'It takes a whole village to raise a child.' In our society it takes grandparents and godparents, friends and relatives, teachers and pastors and many others.* – Putting Children and Families First

Family Reflection

Reflecting on Advents past, I remember how I learned about waiting with hope when I was 12 years old. My Girl Scout troop went caroling in part of our town nicknamed "Russian Village" for the immigrants who had settled there. There were many stories about this place – some probably true, and other tales people liked to tell for excitement. Many of the residents were elderly and stayed close to home.

We came to a home that had candles lit in the window and sang our first carol. I'll never forget the look on the woman's face as she opened her door. A smile and tears appeared on her face. She clapped her hands in joy and went inside and came out with plastic bags full of popcorn and candy in a crumpled paper sack. As she gave us each a bag of popcorn and told us that it had been many years since carolers had come to her home. We learned that each year she made bags of goodies to give carolers, and for 20 years no one had come. But she was always ready. Each year she waited for strangers to come to her door to sing songs about our Savior's birth.

She was a woman of Advent, a woman who waited with hope. She is also like our God, who waits for us. During Advent we wait in joyful hope as we prepare ourselves to receive the gifts God has to offer.

– Laura Stanko Britto

Make copies, cut in half and insert in your bulletin

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> *Children need the love, acceptance, and support of a family that cares for them. But families need to be able to meet basic physical and social needs to help their children grow and develop.*
> – Putting Children and Families First

Family Reflection

It was a hot August day when I met Karen, 17, mother of a 13-month-old and pregnant with her second child. I was her "Resource Mom," a support person for her and her family. I was pregnant with my first child at the time, and in her own ways, Karen helped me prepare for the birth.

She had married the father of her first child, and his meager, sporadic income was barely enough to pay for the old, unair-conditioned trailer where they lived. He made too much to qualify for public housing. Karen came from a broken family; her mother had died two years earlier and her father was an alcoholic. She was unsure at times whether she could handle this second child and wondered how she would manage. She was bright and wanted to go back to school. The school had a day-care facility for her child, but she did not have transportation.

Despite her hardships, Karen had hope, hope that she would have a better place to live, new clothes for her children, and an easier life. Her son was born six weeks early with complications that required him to be moved to a major medical center more than an hour away from home. Soon there were many resource moms and dads from the local church helping Karen. Public housing was found, and her son fully recovered from the complications. A few months later, Karen gave me a gift of hope when she called the day after my son was born and was in neonatal intensive care with a life-threatening infection. She did not have a phone, but someone had told her about my son, so she had walked to a pay phone on a rainy day to tell me she was there for me.

(continued on reverse)

As we approach Christmas, we look to Mary, a young woman about the same age as Karen, who gives birth in a stable to a son named Jesus. From his birth, Jesus identified with people who are poor and in need. In this last week of Advent, let us reflect on the birth of Jesus and the circumstances leading up to it.

– *Laura Stanko Britto*

Fourth Week of Advent Prayers of Waiting

Sunday, December 20. We are at the winter solstice, when our days begin growing longer again. We pray for all who wait for the light of Christ in their lives.

Monday, December 21. We pray for all who live with anxiety and fear, that their waiting may bring calm and peace into the center of their lives.

Tuesday, December 22. We pray for our brothers and sisters living in areas of the world where there is war and division, that their waiting for peace will end and they will know safety and security.

Wednesday, December 23. We pray for ourselves, who have waited in lines, wrapped gifts, and sent cards, that preparations for celebration will bring joy and happiness to our families.

Thursday, December 24. Our waiting is near an end. Look for the Christmas star tonight and offer your prayer of hope to our Savior who is born to us. Tell the Christmas story at your family gatherings.

Friday, December 25. Merry Christmas. May the joy and peace of Christmas be with you and your family.

Prayers of Waiting, Laura Stanko Britto © 1992. Used with permission.

Catholic Charities USA

• Supporting Families • Building Community • Reducing Poverty

Catholic Charities adoption and pregnancy services include support for women who are facing unplanned pregnancies. If you, your daughter, or someone you know is facing an unplanned pregnancy, remember that Catholic Charities is there to help.

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Make copies, cut in half and insert in your bulletin

Third Week of Advent
Prayers of Waiting

Sunday, December 13. Today is Guadate Sunday, a Sunday of rejoicing. We pray today that we all may wait with joy for the coming of our Savior.

Monday, December 14. We pray for the lonely, who wait each day for a visitor or a letter in the mail.

Tuesday, December 15. We pray for the joy of reconciliation in our lives as we pray for all who wait to know forgiveness.

Wednesday, December 16. We pray for people who are handicapped, disabled and specially challenged, who wait for justice and the many things that most of us take for granted.

Thursday, December 17. We pray for our brothers and sisters in Eastern Europe, who know new freedoms but wait for economic stability and justice in a new political system.

Friday, December 18. We pray for children and the young at heart, who wait for Christmas with enthusiasm and anticipation, that their waiting will lead to the true meaning of this season.

Saturday, December 19. We pray for families who grieve the death of a loved one this season, that in their waiting they may be comforted and strengthened by our God.

Prayers of Waiting, Laura Stanko Britto © 1992. Used with permission.

Catholic Charities USA

• Supporting Families • Building Community • Reducing Poverty

Helping parishes and communities better serve senior adults is the focus of a Catholic Charities USA project funded with a grant from the federal Administration on Aging. The nationwide project develops resources to help parish volunteers learn to link people in need with available resources. If you are interested in receiving information about local programs for senior adults, use the National Area Agency on Aging Eldercare Locator phone number, 1-800-677-1116.

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Preaching Resources

"We urge a reordering of priorities — personal, ecclesial, and societal — to focus more on the needs and potential of our children. This message is a call for conversion and action — a spiritual and social reawakening to the moral and human costs of neglecting our children and families."

(Putting Children and Families First)

This resource for preachers was developed by the Preaching the Just Word Project of the Woodstock Theological Center. It has four parts:

1. An *overview* by Rev. Walter J. Burghardt, S.J., the founder of the Preaching the Just Word Project of the Woodstock Theological Center.
2. An *orientation* to the task by Rev. Raymond B. Kemp.
3. *Preparation for Preachers: Reflections on the Sundays of Advent.* These reflections for preachers by Raymond B. Kemp focus on the Sundays of Advent, and are drawn from homilies prepared by a group of preachers who gathered in Annapolis for the fourth Preaching the Just Word Retreat in May 1992. They are not sample homilies; rather, they are insights from American Catholic preachers to other preachers. (Information on similar retreats for preachers can be obtained by calling Father Ray Kemp, Coordinator (202/687-4223) or by writing the Woodstock Theological Center, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. 20057.)
4. *Excerpts from a specific homily* on these themes by Fr. Burghardt, S.J.

A. Overview:

Children: A Just Word in Advent?

by Walter J. Burghardt, S.J.

The bishops of the United States have called us to campaign for children and the family. Here is a central focus for American Catholic thinking, praying, acting, and ... preaching. Not that other issues are unimportant. Racism has been again highlighted by the L.A. catastrophe; sexism is a ceaseless issue; the earth that sustains us we continue to rape; the health of our people is in imminent peril. Why the stress on children? Why is this a Catholic concern?

Several searing reasons, underscored in the bishops' document: (1) The declaration of John Paul II: "In the Christian view, our treatment of children becomes a measure of our fidelity to the Lord himself." (2) Children are among the most vulnerable members of the human family. (3) Right now and always, children are God's gift to our world, to us, a singular sign of the Christ who was born like us, for us. (4) Our children are our future; our country will be what our children will make it.

And yet our U.S. children are an endangered species: (1) Each year 1.6 million are forcibly prevented from seeing the light of day. (2) 40,000 do not live to see their first birthday. (3) One out of five children (one out of four black children) grows up poor in the richest nation on earth. (4) The U.S. has one of the highest divorce rates, teenage-pregnancy rates, child-poverty rates, and abortion rates in the Western world. (5) Teenage suicide has tripled in 30 years. (6) Each year 2.5 million children are abused or neglected. (7) More than 25 percent of our teenagers drop out of school.

Such unadorned facts conceal and reveal a troubling reality: This wealthiest of all nations is largely unaware of the powder keg on which it is poised. The injustice, the danger, the horror of it all have not entered America's bloodstream, are still cold concepts. The irony of it: Each hour we taxpayers are shelling out 33.7 million dollars to salvage the Savings and Loan scandal; a full month of such generosity could transform the faces of our children, console "Rachel weeping for her children because they are no more" (Mt 2:18).

> ***...The most Christian of gifts, the most human of gifts, is to bring hope into the eyes of the hopeless.***

How to raise the consciousness of our Catholic people? A highly practical way is the weekend homily, the preacher face-to-face with a believing congregation that yearns to be stimulated. Especially in the Christmas season, from Advent to Epiphany.

(Catholic Relief Services photo)

For this season celebrates God manifesting Godself to the world in Christ. How? As a child. The Son of God was born as we are, came from a mother's body as we do, became what each of us grownups once was. How imaginative, how thoughtful of God to share the helplessness of our childness — the child Cardinal Newman characterized as "Omnipotence in bonds."

But the Christ child raises a problem. On the one hand, you have our Lord's trenchant assertion, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me" (Mt 18:5). On the other hand, for all too many of the world's children, "there is no room in the inn" (Lk 2:7). In the next 60 seconds, 27 children under five will die — mostly from diseases we know how to prevent. And across the world, do you know how many children will probably die in this decade of the 90s? 150 million.

This year we dare not preach the Christ child without preaching the child who is Christ. There is no point in our people offering the Christ child "gold and frankincense and myrrh" (Mt 2:11) if the children for whom he was born are hollow-eyed from hunger, if black children have to beg for crumbs that fall from white tables. Isaiah would say that "justice is far from us" (Is 59:9) as long as hundreds are born addicted to coke or crack, as long as on our own streets a child is injured or killed by a gun every 36 minutes.

Some Advice About Preaching

1. I do not see how you can bar the controversial from the pulpit simply because it is controversial. After all, I cannot be content with glittering generalities. I must move the Gospel to this age, to this people; but the meaning and demands of the Gospel today are chock-full of complexity. And the more complex an issue, the more open to controversy.

2. The pulpit is not the proper forum in which to pontificate on complex, controversial political and socioeconomic issues. Here the crucial word is "pontificate." On such issues, in a short span of time, with no room for counterargument, I dare not speak in dogmatic fashion, as if I alone am the trumpet of the Lord.

3. If I dare not dogmatize, I may still raise the issues, lay them out, even tell the faithful where I stand and why. Not to impose my convictions as gospel, but to quicken their Christian conscience, to spur them to personal reflection.

From Rev. Walter J. Burghardt's introduction to *Preaching the Just Word: Resources for Homilists*, 1991.

Before we mount the Advent pulpit, let each preacher look long and hard into the Christmas crib. What do I see there? Not the first Christ, the Christ of starry Bethlehem; he has grown up, has risen from the dead. But his place is taken, the manger is filled, by other Christs: an infant born with AIDS; a white Christ with Down's syndrome who will never really grow up; a black Christ lullabyed with automatic gunfire; a brown Christ staring into hopelessness. Perhaps the crib is empty, because a fetus was not allowed to reach it.

If America's children cannot light a fire in the preacher's belly, what will? Read the Christmas story with fresh eyes, the eyes of a child, the eyes of America's most vulnerable....

Shall we be spoiling our people's Christmas? Only if Christmas is a refuge from reality. Only if Advent casts off its violet hue, its summons to repent, to change our way of looking at people and things. Only if we ceaselessly see the Baptist's whiplash hurled exclusively at first-century Jews, not at 20th-century Christians: "Who has warned you to flee from the wrath that is coming? Produce fruits worthy of repentance" (Lk 3:7-8) — that is, show by your actions that new life, God's life, has sprung up in you. Only if our faithful fail to realize that the most Christian of gifts, the most human of gifts, is to bring hope into the eyes of the hopeless.

If America's children cannot light a fire in the preacher's belly, what will? Read the Christmas story with fresh eyes, the eyes of a child, the eyes of America's most vulnerable, and the liturgical readings will rise from all too familiar embers, will glow with new life. It's all there — in God's Word and on the face of today's Christ child. Read it ... weep ... and speak to the hearts of your people.

B. Orientation

by Rev. Raymond B. Kemp

The preaching of the texts for the Advent and Christmas seasons will inevitably push the preacher into the concern of the church for families and children. There is no need, no call, to manipulate the biblical texts to fit the agenda of the challenge. First read the bishops' statement on children and families, use it for some periods of reflection and prayer. Then, with the help of some fine commentaries and translations, prepare your homilies from the biblical text and your own context.

The task for preachers begins with listening. Listening well to God's Word in the lectionary, to the larger context from which the reading is taken; listening to the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the figures in the readings situates the preacher in a mode of openness to God.

The next set of sounds for listening comes from your own people: their real-life situations, their hopes and frustrations, their values and biases, their consciousness of the presence of Christ in the here and now. As Father Burghardt suggests here, "This year we dare not preach the Christ child without preaching the child who is Christ." We listen to what is happening around us, the headlines, yes, but the stories of our very own people who will never make the headlines seem filled with the presence of the Christ.

We "read" their lives, we try to get to the questions under their questions, to the hope that sums up their hopes. Then we attempt to speak these in ways our people would be able to recognize. We put that hope, question, bias, value out in front of those who have heard the proclamation of the Scripture and ask "Is this what I am hearing? How does what I am hearing/saying measure up to what is real for you? How are you affirmed or challenged, supported or confronted by God's Word?

All preaching—all successful preaching—from the evangelists through the first centuries to this day, is local preaching. One of the best reasons to have our preachers live with their parishes is to afford them the opportunity to hear the hurts and the pain, the joys and the strengths in the stories of the people who will listen to Sunday's scripture and homily. Preaching like the Church herself begins with the local, the particular, and moves to the nation and world, the more general. You can take your parishioners from the Christ child to the child who is Christ in your parish and neighborhood first. Then take them to the children and families from the area who often mirror our own situation in ways we do not anticipate. The poor have many of the same questions, values, biases, and strivings, as the rich. And vice versa. You see it. You can say it.

Your preaching will help singles see they are not alone. They come from families and have responsibilities for children in the parish and neighborhood. They teach religion, tutor, coach, mentor, and work with seniors. Families who know other families are having similar problems in raising their children because they heard you speak about it, know also where they can find help, again, because you preach. Children who are troubled, confused, and looking for direction know it is acceptable behavior in your parish to admit to not having all the answers and to seek help, because you told them where they might find a good listener and some real assistance. Your preaching can show the neighbors and the needy that your parish is a place where children and families are valued and their troubles addressed in peer ministry and in special referrals. The text of the lectionary takes you to the context of your own parish through your reflection, prayer, conversation, and the willingness you display to receive input and suggestions from your hearers.

> ***One of the best reasons to have our preachers live with their parishes is to afford them the opportunity to hear the hurts and the pain, the joys and the strengths in the stories of the people who will listen to Sunday's Scripture and homily.***

For commentaries, see Raymond E. Brown, S.S., *The Birth of the Messiah*, Doubleday, 1977; The *Collegeville Bible Commentaries* from Liturgical Press; *The Catholic Study Bible*, Oxford University, 1990; and *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Prentice-Hall, 1990. Also, see Dieter T. Hessel, ed., *Social Themes of the Christian Year: A Commentary on the Lectionary*, Geneva, 1983.

The Lectionary *For the Christian People*, Cycle A, Pueblo, and various children's lectionaries are readily available. Resources for celebrations of the Word for children and children's catechesis should be explored. Even more than adults, children dealing with the topic of children and families, especially of the vulnerable children in our communities and around the world, provoke in them an early interest in God's creation and often serve as the genesis of human and church service vocations. See *Gather the Children* (Pastoral Press, 225 Sheridan Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011, 202/723-1254) and Treehaus Communications, Inc., *Sunday Liturgy of the Word with Children* (Post Office Box 249, Loveland, OH 45140, 800/638-4287). For assistance with teenagers, see William J. O'Malley, S.J., *Converting the Baptized*, Tabor Publishing, 1990. And for your own pleasure, re-read Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol.*

C. Preparation for Preaching: *Reflections on the Sundays of Advent and Major Feasts of the Season*

by Rev. Raymond B. Kemp

The reflections which follow on the Sundays of Advent are intended to demonstrate how the themes of the Campaign for Children and Families can be woven into regular preaching. Obviously, other feasts of the coming season such as Christmas, Epiphany, Holy Family Sunday, and three feasts devoted to Mary (the Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Guadalupe, and January 1) also lend themselves very well to preaching on themes of family and children.

The Liturgical Season: The Advent, Christmas, Epiphany Cycle

Advent (from *adventus*) is the season for awaiting the coming of the Christ who will fulfill the promise of salvation and restore God's creative intent. From the prophetic expectation of the birth of the Messiah, to Mary's pregnancy and Jesus' birth, the slaughter of the innocents, the feast of the Holy Family and the Magi's homage to Israel's infant king, the Advent-Christmas cycle is penetrated with symbols and themes which awaken us to the importance of children. Week by week the Sunday Advent Cycle assigns distinctive themes for the congregation's meditation.

Expectation of the Messiah in the first week, is tied up with anticipation of God's universal rule (First Reading, Isaiah 2:1-5). It may be appropriate then to speak about the international dimensions of responsibility for children, and particularly about the suffering brought on children as the result of war: in Africa, the Middle East, Central America, or Southeast Asia.

The Second Sunday of Advent features John the Baptist preaching repentance (Mt 3:1-12). The first reading from Isaiah presents the prophet's vision of "the peaceable kingdom" where the lion lays down with the lamb. Isaiah's oracle is filled with images of a world made safe for children: "a little child will lead" the wild beasts, and infants will be safe as they play near venomous snakes (Is 11:6,8). The Second Sunday, therefore, may be an appropriate time to talk about the conversion necessary to make American society safe for children.

The Third Sunday offers the transition from John to Jesus. The world's yearning for salvation (Is 35:6) heralded by John is fulfilled in Jesus (Mt 11:4-5). This third Sunday presents an opportunity to discuss the wide variety of healing necessary in our world: preventing abortion, supporting family values, and alleviating poverty.

(Art from Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, USCC Publishing Services)

The Fourth Sunday of the season focuses on the sign (Is 10-14) of Jesus' birth (Mt 1:18-24). Two possible ways of utilizing this feast in connection with the children's theme are: (1) to see Jesus' birth as a sign of hope for the world's children; and (2) to reflect on the name Emmanuel (God-with-us) as a symbol of the divine gift present in the birth of every child.

The Gospel readings in the A Cycle are taken from Matthew. By contrast with Luke's version, Matthew's account of the birth of the Messiah is marked by tension, conflict, and tragedy.

Finding Mary with child, Joseph is prepared to divorce her secretly (1:18-20). Herod suspects the child Jesus of being a rival driving the Holy Family into exile (2:13-15), and the King's anxiety over losing the throne prompts his massacre of the innocents (2:16). It is as if the whole narrative resounds with the cries of "Rachel weeping for her children" (2:16).

Details like these provide preachers with opportunity to reflect on the family tensions and social and political pressures which threaten children today without departing too far from the theological insights of the evangelist. Just as the world into which Jesus was born saw the innocents slaughtered, so in our own day Jesus is identified with the children who are the victims and orphans of war. Just as the political ambitions of a petty tyrant forced Joseph to flee with Mary and Jesus into Egypt, so dictators and warlords drive millions of people into homeless wandering. Today there are at least 17 million refugees. Most are the victims of war and political oppression. In six months time, the Gulf War alone created 5 million refugees. In becoming human, Jesus took upon himself the history of affliction borne by children right up to the present day.

> ***Just as the world into which Jesus was born saw the innocents slaughtered, so in our own day Jesus is identified with the children who are the victims and orphans of war.***

In the Advent season, the experience of the suffering of children gives meaning to our longing for redemption. Because we know too well the frailty of our own families, tolerate by our inaction the public indifference and resentment toward poor children at home, and witness on television the violence done children by war and political repression abroad, we are able to appreciate humanity's need for a child who "will save his people from their sins" (1:22).

Children and the Kingdom

While Matthew sometimes inclines to a spiritual view of the family which downplays natural relationships in favor of religious commitments to Jesus and the Kingdom (10:35-39; 12:46-50), children play a special role in his gospel. Jesus holds them up as models for those who want to enter the kingdom of heaven (18:1-4; 19:14). Over the objections of his disciples, he welcomes children and prays for them (19:13-15). Conversely, children (and the childlike) recognize Jesus as the Messiah (21:15-16; 11:25-27) even as the chief priests are blind to him.

Jesus' favorable attitude toward children, as found in Matthew, may also inform our preaching. "Putting children first" is fast becoming as uncommon as it was in the ancient world. Care for children, like care for the weak and vulnerable, cannot be taken for granted. As natural as caring for children seems to be, our consumer culture, along with others, seems to regard concern for God's "little ones" exceptional. Taking the side of children makes us Jesus' disciples, literally, people who have learned their values from him.

Luke's Christmas Story

The Gospels for Christmas Midnight Mass and Christmas morning are taken from Luke rather than Matthew. If Matthew's Gospel resounds with thunder and storm, Luke's is filled with gentle rain and sunshine. Luke gives us most of the familiar images of Christmas: the child wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, the shepherds visited by angels, shepherds gathered in homage around the newborn, the mother contemplating her child.

The familiarity of Luke's story of Jesus' birth is no accident. The evangelist was intent on demonstrating the everyday relevance of the gospel. The angels announce "today a savior is born." Luke's infancy narratives show how the Christ event touches a variety of people (Elizabeth, Zachariah, Mary, Joseph, the shepherd, Simeon, Anna).

Some scripture scholars speak of the Book of Luke as the Gospel of Peace. The coming Messiah will guide his people "on the way of peace" (1:79). In their appearance to the shepherds, the angels offer a blessing of "peace" (2:54). On seeing the child Jesus, Simeon asks to die in peace (2:29). Accordingly, a key social theme associated with the Lucan Christmas narrative is peace as the gift of God. It would be appropriate, then, whether from the point of view of urban violence or resolving lingering armed conflicts, for a preacher this Christmas to reflect on God's promise of peace for today's children.

Another theme much associated with Luke's Gospel is God's love of the poor. It is highlighted in Mary's Canticle, The Magnificat (1:46-55), which praises God who "raises up the lowly." The annunciation of Jesus' birth to the shepherds (2:8-14), and the revelation to the elderly Simeon and Anna (2:22-38), exhibit the importance of poor and marginal in God's plan, the poor to whom Jesus will preach the Gospel (4:18). A social approach to Christmas preaching on behalf of children cannot ignore the divine concern for the poor that permeates Luke's Gospel.

The Sundays of Advent

First Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 2:1-5
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:37-44

The coming of the Son of Man repeats what happened in Noah's day and in most "days" since: people eat and drink, decide to marry, and are married right up to the day Noah enters the ark. While we cannot know the day, we must always be on the watch, for the Son of Man is coming when we least expect.

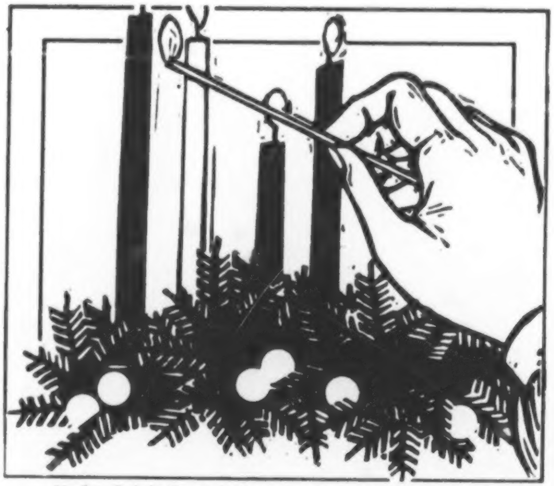
Is it too much of a "stretch" to see this coming in the cries of our young, in the struggles of our families to build their relationships on the pattern of Jesus Christ? Isaiah paints the picture of God's house on a great mountain to which all peoples stream to learn God's plan. We look to God's Word, to the Church, to the state of the world around us and know what God wants.

We need to transform swords into ploughshares, spears into pruning hooks in a world where nearly two million children have died in the last 15 years and seven million are growing up in refugee camps as a result of war. In violence closer to home, more teenage boys die of gunshot wounds than from all natural causes combined.

The best preaching will reflect the time you spend in your families listening to hurts and hopes.

As one city pastor said, "You gotta wake up before you rise up." Let's wake up to Jesus' coming in our midst now. We must fight the feeling that there is nothing we can do to influence the way things are going for children and families. Break the grip of the individualism so much around us and see the coming Christ in the children around us. *Wake up* and *rise up* so that families and our children don't *give up*.

The best preaching will reflect the time you spend in your families listening to hurts and hopes. Move out of your particular situation to see what can be done. We can rise above this moment where many are tempted to despair, or we look again from the mountain top of God's vision of equality, not just for our own children, but for the children of the world.



(Art from Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, USCC Publishing Services)

Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 11:1-10
Romans 15:4-9
Matthew 3:1-12

Advent is a time to tell stories of people reforming their lives because they know God is at hand. Richard Fragomeni pirated the idea that Christmas is Easter in the winter time just when I thought the differences between Advent and Lent were clear. Play with this idea if you are in a climate where the frost or the first snow has appeared. The Gospel message is reform! The reign of God is at hand! The Isaiah reading is filled with the way the expected one will judge.

Not by appearance or hearsay but "he will judge the poor with justice and decide aright for the land's afflicted." God is moving against the ruthless and slaying the wicked. Decide whose side you are on. The little child will guide them.

This is the time to name the reforms needed, time to identify the demons, and time to apply the power of the Spirit of God. Sadly, racism renews itself in our country. There is a willingness to help the poor as long as they are meek and an ignorance of how many poor families faithfully struggle against all odds to create an environment wherein their children can be educated and nourished on the Lord and their own gifts.

Within every metropolitan area there are stories and opportunities to present. Within parishes that are close to the poor, there are attitudes to be exposed. The story of Brenda, who, with her son, managed to escape the ghetto, secure both a graduate degree and an excellent position for herself as well as an upscale education for her son, may help you to see that we can run but we cannot hide. Her son decides to throw a party in their suburban home. And the crashers arrived from the suburbs breathing threats and brandishing guns. The police were called, the party was shut down. All was not well in her suburb.

Brenda could have banned all parties forever. But she collected herself and had her son bring in some friends to discuss the incident. She began to understand that the inclination to violence has current patterns among the children of the well-to-do in excessive weekend drinking and fistfights. Now guns were replacing fists in the duels of the young.

Brenda took it upon herself to confront some of the parents of those involved. She inquired of the local public high school and her own son's private school. She raised the question, "Who is dealing with these afflicted ones?"

She kept urging both the school and the parish to identify staff and volunteers who were successful in communicating with troubled youngsters, to put them to work with those teenagers who knew where the trouble was, and to begin to get the young to surface their feelings. All is not well in Brenda's suburb, but adults are talking to teens and teens are talking to one another. Ignorance and fear have been thwarted and parents and youth are facing the issue. Brenda credits her faith in God and the insistent preaching of her priests in moving her to take action.

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-6,10
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say it: Rejoice! The Lord is near. Gaudete Sunday in the pink. Hardly a time to think of terror. Christmas is coming. Rejoice.

But terror and death encompassed Jesus, his cousin, companions, and church. John sends messengers from prison in today's Gospel. He will not escape this prison. And the reading from Isaiah recalls that vast uprooting of people that was Exile. How many Jewish lives were lost some two-and-a-half millennia before Hitler?

The amazing fact is that Jesus preaches and acts on a Gospel of healing in the midst of terror. The prophets find reason to hope even in exile. The patient enduring of hardships in the midst of madness is a remarkable Jewish-Christian virtue. Patience is not a sit-around virtue for the believer but an active, energetic patience whose driving force is healing, peace, and the Good News.

It turns out that those who believe in sacraments, in a God ever present in and to creation, take a decidedly different view of human suffering than the rest. We will not let God be mocked as absent or disinterested. We believe in a divine presence that heals and strengthens, that insures the Gospel is preached to the poor, that is unafraid of terror, threats, and death.

> ***The history of our healing ministry that comes from Jesus is one of hospitals, orphanages, and relief services to those victimized by drought, war, or political oppression.***

Perhaps today is the day to rejoice in this sacramental view of reality, to celebrate being *Catholic*, belonging to a church with a history made real today in our worship, and in our worldwide and local aid to the poor. The history of our healing ministry that comes from Jesus is one of hospitals, orphanages, and relief services to those victimized by drought, war, or political oppression. Today would be a perfect day to celebrate a communal anointing of the sick that would lift up the value of those who bear with illness as well as of emphasizing the healing power of Christ alive in the Church. The pastoral care of young and old cuts across generations and reflects our insistence that hope springs eternal.

Today might be the day to deal with other troubles and their potential for healing. The bishops raise a number of troubles. In keeping with our Catholic identity, one of our retreatants recalled Woody Allen in *Annie Hall* saying, "When I get married, I want it to be for life, like pigeons and Catholics." Many families need healing and support. Do they know the Church as helper and guide in keeping families together? How about our willingness to deal with addictive patterns of behavior that can corrode family life? Alcoholism and drug abuse continue to rip us apart from within. But twelve-step programs like AA and NA have proven their worth and are grounded in the truest understanding of the healing effects of the sacrament of penance.

The bishops speak powerfully about divorce. You have countless stories of families dealing successfully to either avoid divorce and rebuild their marriage on a healing that comes from self-sacrifice or, when reconciliation is utterly impossible, dealing with the greater good of caring for children in ways that are strong, loving and wise. Share some of your stories today to reassure and rebuild hope in God, in one another, in our children, and in our elders.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 7:10-14
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-24

Are you ready for Christmas? What a question. The better question is: Are you ready for this child Emmanuel, are you ready for children, are you in touch with the gift of the child in you?

> ***...Action on behalf of vulnerable children and families demonstrates Catholics' faith and commitment to the larger community and our family values.***

Salvation is a "churchy" word. To "save" in our culture usually refers to something we do with money or time. To "be saved" generally has the sense of rescue, especially from a life-threatening danger. The very question of what this child is to do for you has to be raised. Are you satisfied that time and money might not be the gifts the savior brings? The use of time and money may well be such a gift from a child, any child. Certainly, God-with-us child has an agenda for our use of time and money.

Children lay claim on our resources, our attention, our whole lives because we know they ought to have a chance to develop their gifts and insights, an opportunity to share the good things of creation, to grow up in a healthy and secure environment.

What this reading from Matthew is clear about is that the child is not only the recipient of gifts, and a gift in its infancy, but that the child brings rescue. The child is God with us, Emmanuel. The child is the manifestation of God here.

What saving does the child bring? The first is in his very name. He says "God saves." No one, nothing, saves in the same way that God saves. Faith in God will lift us beyond thinking we have all the answers or thinking that we are God. Our sins will be forgiven by and in this child. The gracious presence of God will overwhelm the power of evil and greed in the child, and through the child to the whole of God's Creation.

The Christ who is raised from the dead has us looking today to our own children, and to the child in us, to see what salvation might mean for us. A conversion of lifestyle, of spending more quality time with our children. A time to hear them, their friends and companions, on the issues of urgency to them.

Are we listening to our children? In some families, the children have as much if not more insight into what's right and wrong than the adults. Children may have a better sense of God's will than we who love to develop excuses and escape clauses. A close friend pointed out that the child in a troubled family raised his parents.

Can we retrain ourselves to listen to our children about matters more important than what they want for Christmas? In *Commonweal* for June 5, 1992, William Houghton, M.D., quotes Peter deVries: "Who of us is mature [enough] for offspring before offspring arrive? The value of marriage is not that adults produce children, but that children produce adults" (p. 9). Listen to children, to the child in you this week. Listen hard when they are ready to offer their insights, even their complaints.

Emmanuel, God with us, in our children is a Christmas gift without parallel. Merry Christmas.

The Immaculate Conception, December 8

Genesis 3:9-15, 20
Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12
Luke 1:26-38

"How can this be?" God chooses a virgin to be the mother of God's Son. A virgin betrothed but not married. Hindsight and centuries of devotion have rightfully endeared Mary to countless Christians and non-Christians alike as a vessel of God's presence and power.

The TV picture is of the Islamic women flocking to a shrine of Mary in Iraq as Americans were bombing Baghdad. "Why are you here?" asked the reporter. The troubled mother answered, "Because the Lady will protect our children from your bombs." Mary, a shield in our time of war, a powerful symbol of protection and grace, also becomes a sign of hope for teenaged mothers who choose to have their babies and raise them. The young grandmother lights the candle before the Virgin's altar and prays with tears streaming down her face. After kneeling awhile and finding some composure and peace, she rises and turns to be greeted by a woman who had been praying. "Can I help?" The grandmother says, "Pray for my daughter who is sixteen and for her newborn son. Pray for me that God will help us become a family that trusts in Him."

No one is happy over our children having children. A lot more needs to be said in effective ways to discourage sexual activity before marriage. Your parish can work this. At the same time, we who are for life are called to deal with teen pregnancy, to assist through our prayers and actions those who are having children in increasing numbers out of wedlock. It is a daunting task to be sure, but young grandmothers can show us the way. And our young men need to hear the stories of our young mothers. All need more education about sexual responsibility and sexually transmitted diseases. The value of human life requires as much education as the destructive power of abortion. Inter-parish programs that put teenagers together to share experiences can be multiplied. Mother Mary can be a powerful example and source of strength.

Holy Family - Sunday after Christmas

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
Colossians 3:12-21
Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

This feast was structured to celebrate Catholic family life. The point of the feast could be made by beginning with the Matthew story, communicating both his symbolic intentions of having Jesus come out of Egypt and settle in Nazareth, as well as the relative degree of danger in raising children in Jesus' time, especially when the poor were constantly on the move for economic survival.

Our retreat preachers acknowledged that they were generally flagging by the time of this feast and were anxious to avoid family-type ferverinos as in "let me tell you how the Holy Family did it so you might go and do likewise."

Some opted for capturing the spirit of John Paul II's *Familiaris Consortio*, highlighting the family as an *ecclesiola*, a little church. The family as "little church" in a larger church highlights the importance of family conversation, rituals, life and faith sharing. The family contributes its insights and faith to the parish and local church. The "little church" finds direction and support from the larger church in a variety of ways: the clear presentation of Gospel and moral values, a prayerful and sensitive liturgy, good Scripture studies and practical help in socializing the young into Church and world. When asked what they want from the Church, parents consistently say that they want concrete assistance in the rearing of children. The culture, especially the materialism and the individualism of the culture, can block efforts to position our children to become servants of this world God has made.

What help can your parish offer families in the rearing of their children in the ways of faith, in counselling the troubled children and families, in providing opportunities for advocacy on behalf of children and families? Tailor this application to the needs of your own situation and you will surely unlock for many the door to a biblical view of the agenda for children and families. Develop the family-centered emphasis of our Jewish sisters and brothers so that our families can realize the potential of becoming "little churches" wherein children and parents bless God for the opportunity to grow together in faith and love.

D. Excerpt from a Sample Homily

Rev. Walter J. Burghardt, S.J.
St. Patrick's Church, Washington, DC
Feast of the Epiphany, January 6, 1991

The three strangers from the East — in all probability, astrologers — do not add anything to the basic Christmas story. But they do serve to remind us of something the "little town of Bethlehem" might possibly obscure. Jesus was indeed born of a Jewish maiden; he did indeed come first to "the house of Israel;" but it is "every man and woman" he came to enlighten, to live for and die for and rise for.

Every man and woman: you and me. It brings us from Babylon and Bethlehem to today's world. Yes, Epiphany celebrates God manifesting, revealing Godself to the world in Christ. But how did God manifest Godself in Christ? As a child. Whom did the astrologers from the East adore on their knees? A child. The Son of God was born as we are, came from a mother's body, became what each of us grownups once was. That is basically why Christmas is so special for children, why we delight in toys for children, in Santa Claus with a child on each knee, in baby Jesus clothed like a king, in the Vienna Boys Choir, in pajama-clad children opening gifts around a tree, children on sleighs, children enveloped in love.

But the Christ child raises a problem. Pope John

Paul II put it bluntly: "...in the Christian view, our treatment of children becomes a measure of our fidelity to the Lord himself," the Lord who asserted, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me" (Mt 18:5). For all too many of the world's children, there is "no room in the inn" (Lk 2:7). In the next 60 seconds, 27 children under five will die in developing countries – almost 40,000 each day. And they will die mostly from diseases we know how to prevent – measles, diarrhea, respiratory infections. In this decade, the 90s, at present rates, do you know how many children will die needlessly? 150 million. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) phrased the pertinent moral principle with devastating clarity:

> ...whether a child survives or not, whether a child is well-nourished or not, whether a child is immunized or not, whether a child has a school to go to or not, a child should not have to depend on whether interest rates rise or fall, on whether commodity prices go up or down, on whether a particular political party is in power, on whether the economy has been well managed or not, on whether a country is at war or not, or on any other trough or crest in the endless and inevitable undulations [of] political and economic life in the modern nation state.

More tragically for you and me, we need not fly to Ethiopia, to Cambodia, to the sub-Sahara to find "no room in the inn" for children. If you take the latest available data in six categories – infant mortality, child abuse, children in poverty, teen-age suicide, teen-age drug abuse, and high-school dropouts – in our own land of power and prosperity their social well-being reached a new low in 1987, "the worst year for children in two decades."

We treat them like statistics, these children for whom the Child was born, for whom He bled. While minds are blunted and bodies stunted, most Americans can eat and drink, play and pray, as if "God's in His heaven and all's right with the world." We forget what the Second Vatican Council saw so clearly: "The future of humanity lies in the hands of those who are strong enough to provide coming generations with reasons for living and hoping" – our hands.

Do the adoring Magi cancel out the prophet Isaiah? Not at all. The prophet continues to protest that "justice is far from us" (Is 59:9). He might even suggest that we "walk in gloom" as long as 25 percent of America's children under six live in poverty, as long as hundreds are born with AIDS or addicted to cocaine or crack, as long as on our own streets a child is injured or killed by a gun every 36 minutes. There is no point in offering the Christ child "gold and frankincense and myrrh" (Mt 2:11) if D.C.'s children for whom he was born are hollow-eyed from hunger, if black children have to beg for the crumbs that fall from white tables. Before we can bask in God's glory, we must scatter some of the gloom that envelops our world, repent of the injustice to children that challenges our life style, take as spoken to us the ageless question Yahweh addressed through Isaiah to the Jews:

(Michael Hoyt/Catholic Standard photo)

Is not this the fast that I choose:
  to loose the bonds of wickedness,
  to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
  and to break every yoke?
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
  and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover him,
  and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?
Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,
  and your healing shall spring forth speedily;
your righteousness shall go before you,
  the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.
Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
  you shall cry, and He will say, Here I am.
(Is 58:6-9)

Only if we love our sisters and brothers at least as much as we love ourselves can our native gloom be transfigured into graced glory. Only then can we really say that in Christ, God has indeed manifested Himself to the world, to us. Reach out to just one of these little ones, and you can sing with sincerity, "Unto us a child is born." The Christ child.

Bulletin Quotes

A CATHOLIC
CHILDREN
AND
FAMILIES
FIRST
CAMPAIGN

The following brief statements on children and families are excerpts from a variety of Catholic documents and other sources. We hope you will use these quotes (cut and paste if you wish) with the enclosed clip art or as stand alone items in your parish bulletin. They can educate, inform and motivate.

A Catholic Campaign

It is urgent therefore to promote not only family policies, but also those social policies which have the family as their principal object, policies which assist the family by providing adequate resources and efficient means of support, both for bringing up children and for looking after the elderly.
Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*

For Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

It is not only poor children, however, who are vulnerable and in need of our concrete commitment; all children need our active concern. The children of affluence, too, can experience poverty, a spiritual and moral poverty. *Putting Children and Families First*

For Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

Proverbs from Africa

- It takes a whole village to raise a child. (Kenya)
- If relations help each other, what evil can hurt them? (Ethiopia)
- Too large a morsel chokes a child. (Mauritania)
- Children are the reward of life. (Zaire)
- Talking with one another is loving one another. (Kenya)

For Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

Abortions are performed far more frequently than most realize. Almost half of Americans believe there are fewer than 500,000 abortions annually in the U.S.; the real figure is more than three times that -- 1.6 million or about 4,400 per day.
Abortion: Choose to Know the Facts, NCCB Pro-Life Secretariat

For Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

To the fatherless be as a father, and help their mother as a husband would. (Sirach 4:10)

For Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

Our church must be an ally and advocate for parents as they struggle to meet their children's needs at home and in an often hostile world where powerful economic and social forces can overwhelm the love and care of a family. *Putting Children and Families First*

For Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

In order to overcome today's widespread individualistic mentality, what is required is a concrete commitment to solidarity and charity, beginning in the family with the mutual support of husband and wife and the care which the different generations give to one another. In this sense the family too can be called a community of work and solidarity. Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*

For Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

It will be necessary above all to abandon a mentality in which the poor -- as individuals and as peoples -- are considered a burden, as irksome intruders trying to consume what others have produced. The poor ask for the right to share in enjoying material goods and to make good use of their capacity for work, thus creating a world that is more just and prosperous for all. Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*

For Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

Families bring children to participate in the development of society. Parents help children grow in moral and spiritual maturity and also help to build a caring and just society. *Putting Children and Families First*

For Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

Through families, children should come to identify with the most needy in the community, especially poor and suffering children, and should develop a life-long commitment to respond through service to the poor and disadvantaged and through action for justice and peace in their own communities and the world. *Putting Children and Families First*

For Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

Racial and ethnic discrimination hurts many families, limiting the incomes and futures of African American, Hispanic and Native American families...Equal opportunity in education, affirmative action in employment and non-discrimination in housing are essential steps to assure a productive and just future for children in minority families. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

Our families need to be strengthened as the basic units of society, not torn apart by endorsement of an alleged basic right to destroy developing members of the family. Our children need care and support, not the threat of death in the womb. *NCCB Congressional testimony*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

We urge a reordering of ecclesial and societal priorities to focus more on the needs and potential of our children. This message is a call for conversion and action -- a spiritual and social reawakening to the moral and human costs of neglecting our children and families.
Putting Children and Families First

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

If our society seeks to help children, it has to support families, since children's lives are nurtured or neglected, enhanced or diminished by the quality of family life. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

Families enable children to share in the life and mission of the church. In the family, parents communicate the Gospel to their children, and children as well as parents learn to live it in their daily lives. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

As a nation, we need to make children and families our first priority, to invest in their future; to combat the forces -- cultural, economic and moral -- which hurt children and destroy families; to manage our economy, shape our government, and direct our institutions to support and not undermine our families. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

In an interdependent world, we need to see clearly how children pay the price for global poverty and indifference, for official corruption, for far too much debt and not enough development, for a global economy dominated by the industrial countries which further impoverish the poor. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

Decent jobs at decent wages -- what used to be called a "family wage" -- are the most important economic assets for families. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

A crucial measure of a man is how he cares for his family -- whether children see his love, respect and care for their mother; and whether he is involved in their daily care, emotional support, spiritual growth, education and development. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

Forty thousand children born each year in the U.S. do not live to see their first birthday. Sixty-seven newborn babies die each day in our land. Our infant mortality rate puts us last among twenty western nations.
Putting Children and Families First

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

Two thousand years ago, Jesus said, "Let the little children come unto me." Today, as his followers, we say let us put our children first, let us shape our families, churches, nation and world to care for our most precious gift -- our children. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

Our nation is failing many of our children. Our world is a hostile and dangerous place for millions of children. We seek to shape a society - and a world - with a clear priority for families and children in need. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

No institution can substitute for the committed love, daily sacrifice, and hard work of parents in caring for their children. But every institution should support parents in their essential tasks. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

We need to understand and act on the links between the children we see dying on the nightly news and the economic and political structures that bring poverty and hunger to millions. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

The fate of children, however, cannot be separated from the fate of their societies. As long as so many nations languish in poverty, the fate of many children will be grim. To overcome the legacy of neglect and mismanagement, indifference and corruption, will require new policies in our nation, in other affluent societies and in the poor countries themselves. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

We are faced with a pattern of national neglect that seriously shortchanges our children. We have neither a comprehensive family policy nor a consistent concern for children. And the youngest members of our society are paying a huge price for our neglect. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

In our society, we need to resist the trends toward excessive individualism, materialism, and the quest for personal pleasure above all else. Real happiness and satisfaction come from who we are and how we care for one another rather than from what we have. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

As believers and citizens, we need - each of us - to use our values, voices, and votes to hold our public officials accountable and to shape a society that puts our children first. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

No government can love a child and no policy can substitute for a family's care, but clearly families can be helped or hurt in their irreplaceable roles. Government can either support or undermine families as they cope with the moral, social, and economic stresses of caring for children. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

Children are the poorest members of our society - one out of five children grows up poor in the richest nation on earth. Among our youngest children, a fourth are poor. Children are nearly twice as likely to be poor as any other group. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

Families need to be empowered to make the choices that meet their diverse needs - in education, child care, health, work, and other areas. Tax, workplace, divorce, and welfare policies must help families stay together and care for their children. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

Traditional moral values are not relics of a bygone age. Rather, they are the best guides to a productive future for our children and health for our society. Responsibility, unselfishness, concern for others, fidelity in marriage, and commitment to children are the building blocks of a creative and satisfying life and a just and decent society. They ought to be recognized in our public policies, encouraged in our media, and supported by our community institutions. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A Catholic Campaign

The ultimate example of powerlessness is to be destroyed before birth. And a terrible sign of national failure is the implicit suggestion to many women -- especially poor women -- that they must choose between life for their unborn child and a decent future for themselves and for their families. We need to shape a society where economic and social forces do not leave women facing fundamental questions of life and death alone and isolated without the support of a caring community. *Putting Children and Families First*

for Children and Families

A CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN

The lives of children are clearly bound with the lives and welfare of women in multiple ways. Discrimination against women continues to be a major contributor to children's poverty. Measures to combat economic discrimination against women -- whether working in or outside the home -- deserve strong support. *Putting Children and Families First*

FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN

A society that discriminates against women impoverishes its children. *Putting Children and Families First*

FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN

Peace and prosperity, in fact, are goods which belong to the whole human race: it is not possible to enjoy them in a proper and lasting way if they are achieved and maintained at the cost of other peoples and nations, by violating their rights or excluding them from the sources of well-being. Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*

FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN

We hope the Catholic community will become a persistent, informed, and committed voice for children and families, urging all American institutions from neighborhood associations to the federal government to put our children and families first. *Putting Children and Families First*

FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN

1992 is an election year. While others are campaigning for public office, let us campaign for children. Let us insist that the needs of our children, but especially unborn children and poor children, take first place in the dialogue over the values and vision that ought to guide our nation.
Putting Children and Families First

FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN

We seek to bring new hope and concrete help to a generation of children at risk. We seek to measure our ministry, our nation, and our world for the manner in which we protect the lives, dignity, and rights of all God's children. *Putting Children and Families First*

FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN

Our children are a test of both our humanity and our faith. As Pope John Paul II said in *Familiaris Consortio*, "In the Christian view, our treatment of children becomes a measure of our fidelity to the Lord himself." *Putting Children and Families First*

FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN

No institution is more deeply involved in serving the needs of children than our community of faith. We bring not only deep conviction, but also vast experience to the challenge of meeting the needs of children. *Putting Children and Families First*

FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN

The economic, emotional, and spiritual well-being of children is significantly diminished by divorce and out-of-wedlock birth, and the negative consequences for children's futures, the lives of women, and for society at large are numerous and pervasive. *Putting Children and Families First*

FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN

Foreign policy is frequently children's policy, and people who care for children need to be deeply involved in assessing the consequences of economic policy and military action for its impact on children. *Putting Children and Families First*

FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN

Social institutions increasingly share many of the family's responsibilities toward children, but they can never take the place of families. Rather, social institutions -- government at all levels, employers, religious institutions, schools, media, community organizations -- should enter into creative partnerships with families so that families can fulfill their responsibilities toward children. *Putting Children and Families First*

FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN

Families need workplace policies that promote responsive child care arrangements; flexible employment terms and conditions for parents; and family and medical leave for parents of newborns, sick children, and aging parents.
Putting Children and Families First

FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Additional Resources

A CATHOLIC
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FIRST
CAMPAIGN

While most sections of this manual identify additional resources that can help parishes and individuals respond to the needs of children and families, more resources exist that could not be included in the previous sections. The following list provides a sampling of additional resources from a variety of disciplines and perspectives.

Catholic Campaign for Children and Families

Putting Children and Families First: A Challenge for Our Church, Nation, and World. The U.S. bishops' statement on children and families. Bishops' Committees on Domestic Policy; International Policy; and Family Life. USCC, 1991, No. 469-4, $1.95, bulk discounts available (800/235-USCC).

I Am Only A Child. A 14-minute videotape prepared by the USCC Department of Social Development and World Peace and Lumen Catechetical, Inc., is an excellent vehicle for promoting the Catholic Campaign for Children and Families. Contact Lumen Catechetical Consultants (301/593-1066) or use the order form in this manual.

Blest Be the Children. Developed by the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis. This packet includes a short version of the bishops' statement, specific parish resources on education, advocacy, and services, training for parish leaders, media events, public service spots, and other activities. Office for Social Justice, Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis, $10 (612/291-4477).

Near to You. A song combining scripture and excerpts from *Putting Children and Families First,* and commissioned by the bishops of Colorado and Wyoming, is available as sheet music, tapes, and a special package with reprint permission from the Archdiocese of Denver Justice and Peace Office (303/388-4435, ext. 155).

Children in Poverty. A public service announcement humanizing statistics through the voice of a child is available in 60-second and 30-second VHS spots from the Archdiocese of Saint Paul/Minneapolis. A line identifying individual dioceses can be added to the end of the film ($150). Contact: Communications Office, Archdiocese of Saint Paul/Minneapolis, 226 Summit Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55102 (612/291-4411).

Parenting

The Family Piece. Features practical ways that parents can support faith development at home. National Catholic Educational Association, 1077 30th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007-3852 (202/337-6232).

The Institute for Peace and Justice promotes several resources for religious education and parenting. Contact IPJ, 4144 Lindell Blvd., #400, St. Louis, MO 63108.

Manual on Parent Training Sessions for Southeast Asian Refugee Parents in Resettlement. International Catholic Children's Bureau, 323 East 47th St., New York, NY 10017 (212/355-3992).

Parenting for Peace and Justice. James and Kathleen McGinnis, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1981.

Pro-Life

Preview of a Birth. 15 min., VHS, color. Explores the wonder and hidden mysteries of fetal development; up-to-date and medically accurate. Available from Human Development Resource Council, 3961 Holcomb Bridge Rd., Suite 200, Norcross, GA 30092 (404/447-1598). $39.95, plus $4 shipping.

Choose Life! Curricula for grades 5-6, 7-8, 9-12. An excellent tool for Catholic school teachers and parish catechists to help foster a pro-life attitude in those they teach. Available from National Catholic Educational Association, 1077 30th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007-3852 (202/337-6232). $12.95 each volume, $4 shipping.

Prayers for the Beginning of Life. A collection of prayers for parents from the beginning of pregnancy through a child's first months. Developed by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, 1989. Available from USCC Publishing Services, No. 297-7, $1.95, plus shipping and handling (800/235-USCC).

Family Life

A Family Perspective in Church and Society: A Manual for All Pastoral Leaders. Proposes a "family perspective" for all policies, programs, ministries and services, and will be especially useful to diocesan or regional representatives who service the needs of parishes. Ad Hoc Committee on Marriage and Family Life, NCCB, 1988. Available from USCC Publishing Services, No. 191-1, $7.95, plus shipping and handling (800/235-USCC).

Families at the Center: A Handbook for Parish Ministry with a Family Perspective. A companion to the above, this handbook explores the role of a family advocate in the parish and the needs of parish priests, deacons, and church workers. Bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family, NCCB, 1990. USCC Publishing Services, No. 337-X, $3.95, plus shipping and handling (800/235-USCC).

Faithful to Each Other Forever: A Catholic Handbook of Pastoral Help for Marriage Preparation. An essential manual for marriage preparation designed for use in religion classes, Pre-Cana conferences, personal counseling, and couple interviews. USCC Publishing Services, No. 252, $22.95, plus shipping and handling (800/235-USCC).

On the Family (Familiaris Consortio). The Holy Father's statement on the institution and sacrament of marriage and the sacredness of the family. USCC Publishing Services, No. 833-9, 1981, $5.95, plus shipping and handling (800/235-USCC).

Creating a Partnership in Faith: A Parish Planning Guide. A useful planning tool for parish staff, it offers ways to strengthen families via faith growth and faith sharing ($3.95). By Thomas Bright and John Roberto. A 20-minute video ($24.95) and a wall chart ($3.95) are also available. Don Bosco Multimedia (800/342-5850).

Social Ministry: General

Bring Down the Walls. A 12-minute audiovisual presentation on the last century of Catholic social teaching. Developed by the USCC Department of Social Development and World Peace and Lumen Catechetical Consultants, Inc., 1991, $19.95 plus postage (301/593-1066).

The Kid's Guide to Social Action. Barbara A. Lewis. Free Spirit Publishing Inc., Minneapolis, MN, 1991.

Marketplace Prophets: Voices for Justice in the 20th Century. An hour-long TV documentary and accompanying study guide on the past century of Catholic social teaching. USCC Publishing Services, 1990, No. 427-9, $29.95, plus shipping and handling (800/235-USCC).

Communities of Hope: Parishes and Substance Abuse. A follow-up to the bishops' 1990 statement on substance abuse, the book is designed as an aid to parishes. USCC Publishing Services, 1992, No. 473-2, $1.50, plus shipping and handling (800/235-USCC).

Building Legislative Networks. A workbook for diocesan-level network development. USCC, Washington, D.C., 1992, $5 (202/541-3191).

Political Responsibility: Revitalizing American Democracy. A statement of the USCC Administrative Board encouraging participation in the electoral process and outlining the role of the Church in public life. USCC Publishing Services, 1991, No. 467-8, $1.95, plus shipping and handling (800/235-USCC).

Renewing the Earth. A statement of the US Catholic Conference on the environmental challenge and Catholic social teaching. USCC Publishing Services, 1992, No. 468-6, $1.95, plus shipping and handling (800/235-USCC).

Moving Faith into Action: A Facilitator's Guide for Creating a Parish Social Ministry Organization. Mary Heidkamp and Jim Lund, Paulist Press, New York, NY, 1989.

Social Ministry: National Issues

Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda for Children and Families. Findings of an extensive two-and-a-half year study by the National Commission on Children, Washington, D.C., 1991 (202/254-3800).

Losing Ground: American Social Policy 1950-1980. Charles Murray. A much debated discussion of antipoverty programs. BasicBooks, 1984.

"Family Policy Statement," first issue of 1992, *Catholic Charities USA*. Catholic Charities USA, Communications Dept. (703/549-1390).

Who's for Kids and Who's Just Kidding. A brochure describing the campaign by the Coalition for America's Children to promote the health, education, safety, and security of all American children. Coalition for America's Children, 1992 (202/857-7829).

Every Fifth Child. The 1992 Offering of Letters from Bread for the World focuses on childhood hunger. Bread for the World, 802 Rhode Island Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. (202/269-0200).

Family Wage: Work, Gender and Children in the Modern Economy. Bryce Christensen, et al. Rockford Institute, 1988.

When the Bough Breaks: The Cost of Neglecting our Children. Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Basic Books, 1991.

"How to Strengthen America's Crumbling Families," *Backgrounder* No. 894 (April 28, 1992). Explains a Family Tax Freedom Plan and pro-family welfare reform to promote two-parent families. The Heritage Foundation, Publications Dept. (202/546-4400).

Policy Review, "America's Crisis at Home: A Symposium." A collection of the most frequently requested articles on family issues and other essays examining the root causes of today's societal problems. Summer 1992 edition. The Heritage Foundation, Publications Dept. (202/546-4400).

Leave No Child Behind: An Opinion Maker's Guide to Children in Election Year 1992. Key data on the status of children in the nation (and compared to other nations), what opinion polls reveal about that data, and what an informed electorate can do to advance a pro-child agenda this election year. Children's Defense Fund, 122 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001 (202/628-8787).

Welcome the Child: A Child Advocacy Guide for Churches. How to involve the congregation in child advocacy, to involve children's concerns in worship and programming, and to tap into national denominational programs for children. Children's Defense Fund, Washington, D.C. 20001 (202/628-8787).

UPDATE. USCC Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) monthly newsletter focusing on refugee/immigration issues and resources. USCC Office of Migration and Refugee Services, 3211 Fourth St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017 (202/541-3220 or 800/428-3717).

OPEN ARMS. MRS quarterly newsletter about today's immigration and ways to welcome newcomers. USCC/MRS (202/541-3220 or 800/428-3717).

Making Room: National Migration Week Celebrations, Projects and Activities. An 85-minute production focusing on immigration to this country and the need for an effective Church response through diocesan and parish strategic planning. USCC/MRS, 1992 (202/541-3220 or 800-428-3717).

Yo Trabajo la Tierra (I Work the Land). Video with study guide. A portrait of the faithlife of a farmworking family in the American Midwest. USCC Publishing Services, 1991, $19.95, plus shipping and handling (800/235-USCC).

"Refugee Children," in *Children Worldwide*, Vol. 19, No. 1/1192. The issue of the ICCB review covers a variety of topics dealing with refugee children.

Social Ministry: International Issues

A Time to Build. An ABC-TV documentary on the Catholic Church in Eastern Europe and its current efforts to find new bearings in a changing society. On videocassette with a study guide. USCC Publishing Services, 1991, $29.95, plus shipping and handling (800-235-USCC).

The State of the World's Children. Annual publications, 1986-1992. Includes World Declaration, Plan of Action, and Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF, New York, NY, 1991.

Children and Development in the 1990's. United Nations Children's Fund, New York, 1990.

Children and the Environment. United Nations Children's Fund with United Nations Environment Programme, UNICEF, New York, 1990.

Investing in Children. W.U. Chandler, Worldwatch Paper #64, Worldwatch Institute, Washington, D.C., 1985.

African American Catholics

Black Children: Their Roots, Culture and Learning Style. Janice Hale Benson, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

"Say Not, I am Too Young." Archbishop James P. Lyke, OFM, St. Anthony Messenger, 1991.

The Rites of Passage. Arnold Van Gennep, University of Chicago Press, 1960.

Children are the Reward of Life. Jawanza Kunjufu, African American Images, Chicago, IL, 1982.

Developing Positive Self-Images and Discipline in Black Children. Jawanza Kunjufu, African-American Images Publishing Co., Chicago, IL, 1987.

Sharing the Old, Old Story. Dr. Nathan Jones, St. Mary's Press, 1982.

"The Search for Values in Black Family Research." Wade W. Nobles in *Journal of Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Spring 1974.

Media Resources

TV and Movie Guide. A weekly newsletter for parishes and schools that carries USCC reviews and classifications of current movies, TV programs, and videos. Catholic News Service, $97/year (202/541-3289).

Movie Guide Monthly. A monthly newsletter that reviews and classifies current theatrical films. Catholic News Service, $12 per year (202/541-3289).

A Movie and Video Guide for Families. A paperback containing capsule USCC reviews of more than 5,000 movies released from 1966 through 1991. USCC Publishing Services, 1991, $9.95, plus shipping and handling (800/235-USCC).

"Preview Line." A nationwide telephone database of USCC movie reviews. $1.50 for first minute and 75 cents each additional (1-900-PREVIEW).

Education

Flight to Hope: A Catholic Collaborative Educational Project on Refugee Awareness. Curriculum for grades 6-12, Spring 1990, $10 per kit.

Kidscount. Annual national and state-by-state statistics on child welfare compiled by the U.S. Department of Education, Center for Study of Social Policy, Suite 503, 1250 Eye Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20056, 1992, $12.50.

Education for Justice. Brian Wren, Orbis, Maryknoll, NY, 1977.

Effective Use of Resources. A self-assessment process on resource management for parish or school leaders. Helen Weber, et al., NCEA, Washington, D.C., 1991.

Spanish-Language Resources

Publicaciones en Español. Librería de Habla Hispana, Chicago, IL. Entre sus títulos se encuentran: Con Cristo transformamos nuestra historia, 6to grado, niño, SECAM; Despertar a la fe, Crecer en Cristo Num O, Libro del Niño; Somos constructores de la historia, 5to grado, niño, SECAM; Carta de los Derechos de la Familia, la Santa Sede; Carta Sobre la Familia, Juan Pablo II; Enseñanza Social del Evangelio, Gregorio Irarte; y muchose más. Escribir a la Librería de Habla Hispana, 5127 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60640.

Los Sacramentos. Doctrina Católica Elemental sobre los Sacramentos para Hispanos Adultos y sus Familias. Entre sus capítulos, aparte de los sacramentos, nos enseña como nos libra la iglesia de la ignorancia, que nos enseña Jesús sobre la pobreza, como superar el prejuicio y otros. Publicado por Tabor Publishing, One DLM Park, Allen, TX.

Recorsos en Español. Comunicaciones Franciscanas. Entre los temas sobre Justicia Social, tenemos: Aquí y Ahora Mismo, Nadie Importante, La Línea Final ya La Redada. Para mayor información, escriba a: Franciscan Communications, 1229 South Santee Street, Los Angeles, CA 90015.

A Spanish manual for the Catholic Campaign for Children and Families is available. For information see the back cover of this manual or call the NCCB Secretariat for Hispanic Affairs (202/541-3150).

NCCB/USCC Order Form

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In addition to the **Manual**, a wealth of resources are available to support this united effort of the Catholic Church in America.

Putting Children and Families First. A Challenge to Our Church, Nation, and World examines the needs of all children in an increasingly difficult world. Presents the moral and religious dimensions of caring for children. No. 469-4, 24 pp., $1.95; 50/$90; 100/$165; 500/$675; 1,000/ $1,200.

Putting Children and Families First

Prayers for the Beginning of Life. A collection of prayers for parents from the beginning of pregnancy through a child's first months. Bishops Committee on the Liturgy, 1989. No. 297-7, 16 pp., $1.95

Family Ministry, A Pastoral Plan and a Reaffirmation. A valuable resource for those who work with families at the diocesan and parish levels. NCCB, 1991. No.426-0, 16pp., $1.20. *Bulk discounts available.*

A Family Perspective in Church and Society. A manual for all pastoral leaders is based on a four-year study and addresses the plight of today's American family and proposes the incorporation of "a family perspective" in the overall ministry of the Church. NCCB, 1988. No. 191-1, 60 pp., $7.95

Families at the Center. A handbook for parish ministry with a family perspective has been developed as a companion to A Family Perspective in Church and Society. This handbook addresses the needs of parish priests, deacons, members of the parish staff, pastoral councils, and volunteers. NCCB, 1990. No. 337-X, 52 pp., $3.95

Families, the Economy and the Church. A book of readings and discussion guide. NCCB, 1987. No. 136-9, 80 pp., $5.95

Communities of Hope: Parishes and Substance Abuse, A Practical Guide. Includes New Slavery,New Hope: A Pastoral Message on Drug Abuse, the 1990 statement. USCC, 1992. No. 473-2, 24 pp., $1.50 *Bulk prices available.*

Faithful to Each Other Forever: A Catholic Handbook of Pastoral Helps for Marriage Preparation. An essential manual for marriage preparation, for use in couple interviews, personal counseling, Pre-Cana conferences, Engaged Encounter, etc. NCCB, 1989. No. 252-7, 154 pp., $22.95

Faithful to Each Other Forever

On the Family (*Familiaris Consortio*). John Paul II's statement on the institution and sacrament of marriage and the sacredness of the family. 1981. No. 833-9, 93 pp., $5.95

Making Room, National Migration Week Celebrations, Projects and Activities. Designed to help parish and diocesan efforts at welcoming migrants, immigrants, and refugees arriving in our churches, neighborhoods, and communities. USCC, 1991. No. 442-2, 56 pp., $7.95

***Yo Trabajo la Tierra* (*I Work the Land*).** This beautifully filmed portrait of a farm-working family is a visual meditation on the dignity of work and faith. Minimal dialogue in Spanish, with English subtitles. 1991. Includes bilingual discussion guide. 13-minute video. No. 472-4, $14.95

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A Catholic Campaign for Children and Families Spanish Resource Manual offers in the Spanish language: a *summary* of the statement, *Putting Children and Families First;* clip art; religious education materials; liturgical resources; social ministry features; family support materials; bulletin quotes and other resources to assist you in implementing this campaign in the Hispanic community.

Pub. No. 534-8, 48 pages. Limited quantities are available at no charge. One manual per parish. Additional copies can be purchased for $2.50 plus postage and handling. To order, just use the order form on page 84 of this book.

I Am Only A Child video will be available in Spanish from Lumen Catechetical for $24.95. See also other Spanish materials in the resource section found on page 82 of this book.

Ofrecemos Este Manual en Español

Una Campaña Católica para Niños y Familias debe tener una clara dimensión hispana. Ninguna comunidad valoriza la familia y los niños más que la comunidad hispana. Es por esta razón que también se ofrecen estos recursos en español.

El Manual de Recursos en Español de Una Campaña Católica para Niños y Familias ofrece, en el idioma español, un resumen de la declaración *Poniendo Primero a los Niños y Familias,* gráficos para recortar, materiales de educación religiosa, recursos para la liturgia, elementos del ministerio social, materiales de apoyo para la familia, citas para los boletines y otros recursos para asistirlos en la implementación de esta campaña dentro de la comunidad hispana.

Pub. No. 534-8, 48 páginas. Copias gratis en cantidades limitadas. Una copia por parróquia. Copias adicionales a $2.50 mas gastos de envio. Para solicitar el manual, use el formulario de pedido de la página 84 de este libro.

El video *Soy Solo Un Niño* va a estar disponible en español a través de Lumen Catechetical por $24.95. Vea también los otros materiales en español existentes, en la sección recursos de la página 82 de este libro.

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